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THE TEAM-WORK OF THE AXIS

THE team-work of the Axis has made this week a curious and interesting study. The Führer and the Duce have spoken and the conclusion is that Mussolini is now without disguises the Italian Gauleiter within the Third Reich. But where are we to place Mr. Matsuoka? His reputation is that of a bustling pupil in American schools of business, who has thrown over the traditional restraints of diplomacy in favour of the "go-getter's" technique. The results have not been happy. It is hard to guess what he hoped to gain by his offer of mediation in this war. He risked a public announcement of it to the press apparently before he presented it to Downing Street. The first consequence was a contemptuous repudiation from Berlin. The next was Mr. Churchill's downright rejection; Mr. Churchill said that our quarrel with the Nazis admits of no compromise.

If Mr. Matsuoka hoped that we should receive this tender of mediation as a friendly and conciliatory gesture, why on earth did he follow it up by his public pronouncement on the future of "Oceania"? He defined this Pacific region vaguely, in terms of mileage, which seemed to bring Australia and the Philippines within it. He hinted at liberating it from European control and added a fantastic estimate of the number of Asiatic—meaning presumably Japanese—immigrants it could receive. A day or two afterwards, when he perceived the inevitable reactions of American and Australian public opinion, he issued a reassuring correction: it seems that Australia and the Philippine Islands are outside "Oceania." Could anything well be clumsier? It may be inferred that for all his bluff Mr. Matsuoka may have a suspicion that Japan is not in fact a first-class military Power, and that he is not really anxious to challenge the British Commonwealth and the United States—or at any rate not just yet. It would be wrong to infer any change in Japan's economic demands in Indo-China or the East Indies. Japan may be waiting for Hitler's spring offensive. Or did he hope that if he made it clear that his next victims are primarily the Dutch and French possessions in Oceania, we and the Americans would breathe a sigh of relief and let him go ahead? There may be a case for Asiatic immigration into part of this area. Java and Indo-China are densely populated, but there is plenty of room in Borneo. The Chinese and the Indians are, however, from the population point of view, as much in need of *lebensraum* as the Japanese: if ever migration is organised in this region, it ought to be under international guidance which will care for the natives as well as the newcomers. The immediate danger is now to Indo-China, where under the pretence of mediating between France and Thailand, Mr. Matsuoka is trying to aggrandise his Siamese protégé—a subject which another article in this issue discusses fully. Mr. Churchill has been very careful not to provoke the Japanese, for none of us can wish the war to spread. But our answer was made clear when Australian reinforcements landed in Malaya. Mr. Roosevelt, who has repeated Mr. Churchill's repudiation of a compromise, may have further trade embargoes in reserve.

The Duce's speech marks a new phase in the education of this dictator. The bombast and the boasting are nearly forgotten, though he was kind enough to assure America that she has nothing to fear from Italy. But why did he parade in a long catalogue of superfluous figures the full extent of his losses in Libya? His argument seemed to be addressed to his own people: "You see, Quirites, I spared nothing to ensure victory: men, guns and tanks were there in profusion: the men fought heroically but they were outnumbered: the whole British Empire fell upon them." This may possibly succeed with the censor's help, for it is unlikely that the Italian public has been allowed to know that in the last battle the defeated, in tanks and men, outnumbered the victors by five to one. But we doubt whether many Italians will believe his statement that the Staff unanimously approved the plans for the Albanian campaign. But the main emphasis of the speech was laid, in phrases of almost grovelling gratitude, on the Duce's expectation that his Führer will now rescue

him. One rather surprising passage dwelt on the admirable behaviour of the German troops in Italy. It is customary to assume that civilised troops will behave well in allied territory, but evidently when these are Nazis, the Italians need to be reassured. No one knows how many German troops there are in Italy apart from the crews and technicians who accompany the dive-bombers. We must assume, at the least, that there are storm-troops in Sicily destined to resist a possible British landing, and conceivably naval crews elsewhere that might restore what is left of the Italian fleet to an active existence.

The Führer's discourse was mainly another repetition of the autobiography which he has been dictating to the listening earth in countless editions ever since he wrote *Mein Kampf*. A psychologist might deduce something from his variations on the monotonous theme. Apart from past history, the speech was chiefly notable for its patches of silence. The invasion of this island was not mentioned, nor did Hitler throw any light on his plans in the Balkans. What he did stress was the menace of the submarine campaign that is to start in spring. Crews are now being trained in the Baltic to man the formidable new fleet of small mosquito submarines which are to fall, no longer singly but in squadrons, in concert with aircraft, upon our convoys. Silence does not necessarily mean that the invasion is postponed: one asks why men on leave from the army in Norway are being recalled.

Preparations go forward methodically in Bulgaria for the reception of the German armies, whose crossing of the flooded Danube may be delayed a little longer by the ice-blocks with which its turbulent stream is cumbered. But the Germans may not have intended to use their bridge of boats till next week: their flank is not perfectly secure until the Yugoslavs give their answer at the end of this week to Hitler's proposals. He asked, if we may trust a *Times* telegram, for help incompatible with neutrality, the use of aerodromes and of the Vardar railway for the carriage of supplies if not of men: in return he offered the northern part of Albania and much of Greek Macedonia: the Bulgars, in this version, are to get Salonica. Meanwhile, Mr. Eden and Sir John Dill have arrived at Ankara. It now seems likely that the Greeks will accept the help of British land forces to repel a Nazi invasion. The Turks hint, but in very obscure language, that they might intervene if Greek Thrace were in danger of occupation: it is part of their "zone of security." On the other hand, they suggest, in equally obscure terms, that they will not feel free to move unless they can get a pledge that Stalin will not fall upon their rear. Let us hope that Mr. Eden can clear up this situation, but the place to do it in might be Moscow rather than Ankara.

Food

Lord Woolton has at last dealt firmly with the luxury and unrationed feeding in hotels and restaurants, by making it an offence, involving 2 years' imprisonment, a £500 fine or both, for consuming a meal containing more than one course of fish, meat, poultry and game, eggs or cheese. The same penalties apply both to the consumer and the proprietor. The decision has come late. It has been the excuse that hotel and restaurant meals represent only a small fraction of the food consumed in this country. That is beside the point, for it neglects the exasperation felt by housewives, who, struggling to get essential meals for their families, have known that those with the money could buy pretty well what they wanted without touching their rations at all. This is a bad kind of "differential rationing." The present method of leaving it to the retailer to ration cheese and eggs is not at all satisfactory: the "best shops" have an inevitable "pull" and they will always tend to put first the interests of their regular best customers. But increasingly Lord Woolton will have to adopt the better kind of differential rationing. He has already disclosed that his department allocates to works canteens double the proportion of meat which is allowed for restaurants and hotels. That is as it should be, since essential workers need the additional calories for heavy work. But it leaves out of account that vast army of heavy workers who have no canteens—miners, agricultural labourers and other outdoor workers. They depend on "chuck" or "bait," and that means taking with them to the job, meat, cheese or corned beef or eggs. The parts of the country where these are needed most have been just those parts which have not had them. Wives have had to send their men to the pits and the fields with bread and jam. Can one imagine the coal-miner, the navvy and agricultural worker doing his day's work on a "Woolton Sandwich"—chopped vegetables bound with chutney? The Minister of Food has promised these classes of workers better food supplies soon, and we believe that a full scheme of universal rationing, probably on the "point system," will be necessary before long It is to be hoped that there is not going to be any more forced optimism from the Ministry about the food position. The British people will not shirk changes in their habits when they realise the true extent of shipping losses and discover that Germany may be able to use 350 submarines at a time against us. By the same token, Lord Woolton must handle firmly the question of communal feeding. There is disquieting evidence that the interests of private caterers are being allowed to block the development of this service. If the Ministry is disposed to listen to these people, it should remember what happened in September. Then it was not officially responsible at the outset. It distinguished itself by improvising with commendable speed. Now it is responsible and will be "in the dock" if it fails. Communal feeding does not mean merely emergency feeding in the Blitz. People should be encouraged to use it now. It should be extended, not only in the big cities, but in every district.

The Case of the Chinese Seamen

In reply to a question in the House of Commons, Mr. Ronald Cross again defended the refusal of the £5 war bonus to some of the Chinese seamen on the ground that their wages had been very substantially increased. These wages have, in fact, gone up during the war in some cases, where the rates were particularly bad, by as much as 400 per cent. But the Chinese have made no complaints on the score of wages. They regard the question of bonus quite separately as a symbol of equality of status. They are running the same risks; they know that sailors of other nations receive this bonus; it has been granted to some eight thousand of the twenty thousand Chinese; why, they ask, should not the rest of them receive similar recognition? The arrests of the men are not likely in our view to make them change their minds. When we said a fortnight ago that the men were convicted because they were "guilty, either individually or in 'conspiracy,' of a breach of contract because they refused to sail again without a war bonus of £5 per month," we stated the substance of the position, but, legally speaking, our language was at fault. We should of course have said that they were summarily convicted for refusing to obey the order to go to sea; they were ready to go if their demand for the £5 bonus was granted. Our complaint that it is altogether absurd to endanger our relations with a friendly people, whose sailors are risking their lives in our defence, on the question of whether they should receive a £3, £4 or £5 bonus, is not in any way modified by the explanation that legally the only thing relevant is that they have disobeyed orders; and that the Ministry cannot have shipping contracts broken in the middle of a round trip. This last point is important as a principle, but in the circumstances the Ministry would surely do well to avoid unnecessary conflict. Nor would the issue be changed if there were truth in the suggestion that "outside influences" were trying to make capital out of the Chinese seamen. That, too, would be irrelevant since the Chinese Consulate has been pressing the claim for this £5 bonus ever since the war began; it is not a sudden demand or one that the sailors learn about on shore leave after they reach this country. The issue is psychological and national, rather than economic. And it is very simple. The Ministry of Shipping and the Ship Owners have already greatly improved the pay of the Chinese seamen. Do they really think it worth while to lose the goodwill of these men and run the risk of holding up ships in this emergency rather than give an extra pound or two bonus to a few thousand men, when they have already accepted the principle by granting the bonus to nearly half of them?

Economic Notes *(by an Industrial Correspondent)*

The longer the war looks like lasting, the more important it becomes that we should not unduly let down our educational standards while it lasts. The uncertainty about the calling up of the "eighteens" this year is already playing havoc with university education. Parents, left entirely uncertain about the age at which their children will be wanted for the army, can make no assured plans about sending them to college; and the most natural reaction is that it is not worth the

expense, and that, in view of the likelihood of their courses being interrupted before they have anything to show for them, further education had better be postponed until after the war. The uncertainty reacts also on employment. Employers argue that it is not worth while to begin training for jobs needing any skill youths who may be reft from them at any moment; and consequently boys who are nearing eighteen find it positively difficult to get work, except of a quite unskilled kind, despite the growing shortage of labour. No doubt, if the army really and urgently needs the "eighteens" some time this year, it must be allowed its way. But the date ought to be fixed well ahead; and there ought, I am sure, to be liberal exemptions both for higher education and for the completion of industrial apprenticeships and technical courses of all kinds. We can ill afford, over the period of a prolonged war, a dwindling recruitment of educated persons and skilled workers.

* * *

A correspondent, who knows what he is talking about, wrote to me the other day from one of the towns which have suffered most severely from air-raid damage. An official town-planning expert had been down from London to discuss with the local authorities what plans ought to be got ready against the time when rebuilding will have to be done. My correspondent was appalled to find that this particular dignitary appeared to be starting from the assumption that rebuilding would be pretty much a matter of "as you were"—that is to say, of rebuilding mainly on the old sites, and with the old ground-plan as a basis and the existing boundaries between the separate local authorities still preserved. I do not know what authority this particular expert had behind him, or how the powers of the Ministry of Health are related to those of Lord Reith's department of Works and Buildings—or, for that matter, to Arthur Greenwood's embryo of a Ministry of Reconstruction. But the moral is that somebody—somebody not steeped in the old traditions of the Ministry of Health, and somebody with plenty of force and authority at his back—ought to be taking this question in hand promptly and energetically, before we find ourselves committed by the routineers to forfeiting the chance of making our cities really new and splendid, and sweeping away the confusion of absolute local boundaries and jurisdictions which make any comprehensive replanning altogether beyond anyone's power.

* * *

The MacDonald Bill (*from a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

This week the Chancellor of the Exchequer followed the unusual course of giving the War Damage Bill a second committee stage. If the truth be told this Bill is out of touch with the realities and no amount of amendment can put it right. While its passage will reassure people, who have had their property destroyed, that they will be compensated on the bases contained in the Bill, damage by enemy action from its very nature is not susceptible to insurance. Compensation for such damage is a charge against the community as a whole and should be met out of general taxation. A capital tax to meet the liability would be sounder from the national point of view.

Off the floor of the House, in the corridors and the smoke room the main subject of discussion, apart from shipping, is what has come to be known as the MacDonald Bill. This Bill enables members to take offices of profit under the Crown, provided the Prime Minister gives his certificate, without losing their seat.

I have not spoken to a single member of any party who is not deeply disturbed by the introduction of this Bill. If its fate were left to a free vote of the House, it would be rejected on second reading.

Why are members so unanimously disturbed? With bye-elections in abeyance new members are brought in on the party coupon without reference to the real views of the electorate. As a result the House, so Members feel, is losing touch and is ceasing to represent the people. Then there are about 81 Members of the House included in the Government. If to these are added parliamentary private secretaries, Commissioners and so on, about 140–150 Members have a direct personal interest in maintaining the life of the Government. This is more than 20 per cent. of the total membership of the House.

Had the party whips been withdrawn when the present All Party Government was formed this identification of the interests of a large number of Members with the Government would not have been so serious; because the remaining Members would have been able to reach individual decision on vital issues. Individual responsibility would in all probability have proved an efficient substitute for an official opposition. Criticism from back benchers in all parts of the House would have kept Ministers up to scratch. As it is Members are wondering how long it will be before the House becomes the servant of the Prime Minister instead of his master.

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OUR CIVIL SERVICE

RED tape and bureaucracy—these twin evils have been the theme of many old diatribes against Socialism. Collective enterprise, we have been told over and over again, is a misnomer, because the servants of the State are willing neither to accept responsibility nor to allow initiative to others. Each Civil Servant becomes the administrator of a tiny fractional operation in a vast and complicated process of departmental and inter-departmental routine; and from the standpoint of each the worst of all possible calamities is that a file should stray from its appointed course. Such a method, good for peacetime routine, becomes impossible when the times call for swift decisions and large changes. It implies an underlying calm of established institutions, and postulates that, when change is needed at all, its pace shall be slow. It is, in effect, utterly unsuited to the conditions of war.

Lord Perry repeated these charges and made many other much less sensible ones in his violent attack on the Civil Service. His case would have deserved more attention and been less open to Lord Cecil's admirable reply if his attack on the Civil Service had not been so clearly an excuse for boosting the business man in office. Let us consider the real case against the Civil Service in wartime.

War imperatively requires an increasing intervention of the State in every sphere of economic and social activity, a collective planning of industry and of the use to be made of every available resource, and an administration impartial enough not to sacrifice the general interest to the claims of particular influential groups. Where is such an impartial instrument to be found ready to hand, except in the Civil Service? The British Civil Service has, on the whole, a high tradition of impartiality—sometimes it seems to obstruct all alike with complete impartiality. It thus combines a quality which is of high value under war conditions with another which is of high disvalue. It is good at checking corruption, but bad at getting things done.

State intervention and public planning being indispensable in time of war, the administrative machine is bound to swell to an abnormal size. It can be expanded in either of two ways—by leaving the regular Civil Servants in control and putting a host of newcomers under them, to learn their ways and obey their rulings, or by setting up new departments under the leadership of men from outside the Civil Service. In this war, we have used both methods. Broadly speaking, the "Controls" have been officered by men drawn from outside the Service—usually from the capitalist institutions over which they are to exercise control; whereas the other departments have been allowed to expand under the continued authority of the old departmental heads. One Ministry—Supply—exemplifies both tendencies. The "Controls," which are largely attached to it, are officered by business men; the central Ministry itself is mainly in the hands of regular Civil Servants.

Both methods have very serious disadvantages. It is unreasonable to suppose that the head of a big trust, who has spent the last twenty years trying to "eliminate surplus capacity" in order to raise profits, will suddenly change his habits and become the best person to secure maximum production now without regard for the effects of increased capacity on future profits. But it is no less unreasonable to expect the regular Civil Service high official, who has been used throughout his life to covering up every step so as never to be made responsible for an irregularity, to turn suddenly into a hustler, animated by an unconquerable will to get things done. Both types of administrator will, doubtless, do their best to change their habits; but only very exceptional men can, in middle age or later, shake themselves free of their ingrained routines and preconceptions, and strike out in radically new ways.

Therefore, the need for a sudden and great expansion of the State administrative machine is bound to give rise to serious difficulties. But in the present war there are two respects in which we have made our difficulties very much bigger than they need have been. In the first place, even if we had to bring in business men as controllers, we need not have put them in control of the industries in which they had a vested interest. The notion, presumably, was that it would be best to have in control of an industry someone who knew it well—though the insistence of the capitalist groups on being allowed to control themselves (and the public) in the name of the State was of a nature to appeal strongly to Mr. Chamberlain, under whom the system grew up. It was, however, by no means necessary that the man at the top should have been chosen from the industry he was

set to control; nor was this the practice followed during the last war. Sir Andrew Duncan, for example, came from shipbuilding, but was then set to control coal; and there were many similar instances. Provided that a man has the qualities needed for running a big economic organisation, he can transfer them readily from one industry to another. It is in the subordinates, and not in the man at the top, that detailed knowledge of the industry to be controlled is required.

This is half the question, but it is only half. The trouble in the departments still dominated by regular Civil Servants is quite different. What is needed in this case is to make leading officials take more risks, assume more responsibility, and break down departmental and inter-departmental barriers which are impassible in time of peace. Now, the plain truth is that, given the right encouragement, some high Civil Servants can do this, whereas others are constitutionally incapable of it. Moreover, if those who are incapable of the required change (many of them most estimable men in other respects) are left in office, they will not merely cause inefficiency and sloth under war conditions in their own sections and departments, but will break the hearts and wreck all the enterprises of their colleagues who are trying to get things done at war tempo. Inside our complicated departmental machine, one man, however enterprising, cannot move much faster than his colleagues; or at all events his work will run to waste if he does. The pace is set for him, and it cannot be much faster than that of the slowest official high up in the department. Nor can the pace of any single department much outrun that of the Treasury—or of the Cabinet Office, where it has pushed the Treasury temporarily aside.

For this calamitous slowness of the departmental routine there may be but one remedy—transference to another sphere of work. Officials who cannot scrap peacetime refinements of routine must be replaced by fresh-minded persons, from inside or from outside the Service, who can. But this doctrine is very unwelcome not only to the Civil Service itself, but also to others who have a much greater responsibility for ensuring the effective prosecution of the war. It is unwelcome to the Civil Service, not only because there, as everywhere, fellow-professionals hang together, but also because the type of really able man who becomes a Civil Servant is usually one who sets an exceptionally high value on security—often one who enters the Service because it will afford him a secure income and leave him scope to follow his real interest of writing Latin verses, or editing the minor poetry of the seventeenth century, or simply going to all the best plays and concerts with plenty of leisure for appreciating them. There is a monkish quality about a good many highly placed Civil Servants, and sometimes a far-away look in their eyes during business hours, as if they were thinking wistfully about something else—Mozart, or Kennington Oval, or even the crossword puzzle in the *Times*, or the competition page of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. It may be that of such is the Kingdom of Heaven; but it is unlikely that *all* such men, however talented, will be really good at doing a wartime hustle in the work of their departments. It is, in fact, clear that some of them—not a few—are very bad at this.

The remedy is, kindly and without malice, to remove these unsuitables, and, without regard to present rank or seniority, put in their places men who can hustle both themselves and others. But here comes the rub. Ministers see their departments, unless they are men of exceptional penetration, largely through the eyes of the senior officials, who are themselves often either the persons who need removing or most unwilling to propose the removal of intimate friends and colleagues. Moreover, where the Minister happens to be a leading Labour man, there is a second difficulty. The Labour movement has fought so long against victimisation and unfair dismissals by capitalist employers that it has come to have a rooted objection to sacking anybody. There is hardly any job more secure than that of a Trade Union leader—unless it be the job of an established Civil Servant. Consequently, when Labour men get into the Government, they do not, in general, sack any of the regulars whom they find in control of their departments, or even bring in outsiders, more in sympathy with wartime needs, to take charge of important emergency work. They tend to leave the established machine as they find it, and to hope that, if they hustle about themselves, issuing orders right and left, their own energy will somehow transmit itself to their departments, and their orders get carried out as fast as they give them.

This does not happen: it cannot happen as long as the old personnel is left undisturbed. The files will still circulate at the customary pace, and by the established routes: the minute subdivision of responsibility will be kept up, the peacetime method maintained broadly without change; and the phantom figure of the Treasury will loom still at every elbow, forbidding haste that may bring rebuke for the omission of an appropriate comma. The more adaptable Civil Servant may chafe; but his energies will be frittered away because he cannot get his projects to the point of action until others have caught up with him.

This is not an appeal to "sack the lot"—far from it. But it is an appeal to Ministers not to take the word of a few highly placed Civil Servants for the state of their own departments, but to poke about in their departments for themselves—even at the cost of neglecting duties on which the high Civil Servants think that *their* Ministers can be better (because more harmlessly) employed. Let Ministers dig down to where the day-to-day work of their departments is being done. They will be surprised, at any rate some of them, at what they will find; and when they have seen they will regard those bland confidantes of theirs, the Permanent Under-Secretaries and Assistant-Secretaries who treat them so nicely, with less complacency than before. They will also, when they have sacked and replaced, not "the lot," but only a few, find themselves much better equipped for dealing with the other source of trouble—the representatives of business interests who are grinding their axes in Whitehall. For the Civil Servant, anxious, as ever, to avoid trouble, is apt to stand between his Minister and a knowledge of what the axe-grinders are doing.

For these reasons we note with relief that a class of administrators, of which Sir William Beveridge is an obvious example, are obtaining an increasing degree of influence. They know the Service; they have no business axe to grind and they are not hampered by routine habits or by the questions of priority and etiquette that undoubtedly slow up administration when it is entirely in the hands of blameless officials. We are far from wishing to be unkind to a highly cultured and, in general, honourable class of men who believe themselves to be earnestly devoted to the public good. But in these days the country cannot afford to "pity the plumage, and forget the dying bird." The State must take over more and more authority, more and more administrative control. It must therefore have in the places of authority men of courage and initiative, able to break down barriers: it cannot afford to make shift with routineers.

THE KINGDOM OF THE WHITE ELEPHANT

MR. MATSUOKA'S acrobatic diplomacy last week has reminded us that Thai and Indo-Chinese delegates are at this moment in Tokyo taking part in a "peace conference," in which Japan is "giving her good services" to arranging the frontiers between these two countries. On Monday, Mr. Matsuoka offered Japanese mediation in any part of the world. On Friday, when his offer had been treated with surprise and good humour, he made the very maladroit explanation that he had only referred to the dispute between Thailand and Indo-China.

The irony of the last speech of this most talkative of Foreign Ministers has been overlooked, mainly because this dispute has been in the wings rather than in the centre of the Pacific stage. To-day Thailand (about the size of Spain) and Indo-China (about the size of France and England combined) are in the news. Japan, in the self-appointed role of arbitrator, has extended the armistice between these countries for ten more days and has submitted her "final offer" to Indo-China.

Thailand spreads out like a kite towards the South Seas, with its body of about 480 square miles alongside Indo-China in the North and Burma in the West, and its long tail about 100 miles broad and about 1,300 miles long stretching down to the borders of the Federated Malay States. Tin and rubber, teak and rice, have given the country a good deal of prosperity and have attracted foreign capital, but 88 per cent. of the Thai people are still engaged in agriculture and only 5 per cent. of them have commercial occupations.

Thailand, the Kingdom of the White Elephant, has managed to retain her independence in the past because she played the role of the buffer State between the British and French possessions in the Far East. But the last ten years have witnessed an effort by her leaders to stand on their own feet and the Japanese propagandists in Bangkok will meet a tough political and economic nationalism against which their "new order" promises will sound rather hollow.

This intense nationalism, characteristic of the countries in the Far East in their struggle to develop out of semi-colonial status, was pushed forward by what is known as the revolution of 1932. The machine guns and tanks which the People's Party mobilised to intimidate the Palace were never used; after a few days the *coup d'état* ended with the People's Party taking over the Government with the support of the King. Royal absolutism was ended; the main architects of this revolution were students who had returned from Europe with anti-monarchical ideas, young military men and government officials who were anxious to change from an absolute to a

constitutional monarchy. Their leader—Luang Pradist Manudharm, had studied law and economics in Paris and, after the *coup d'état*, he was a member of the first State Council, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, and since 1938 he has been Minister of Finance. Luang Pradist had the support of Phya Bahol Balabayuha, who had received his military training in the German army in which he was appointed a lieutenant and at the time of the *coup d'état* he was second in rank in charge of the Siamese army. In 1933 he became Thai Premier, and then was followed by another leader, Luang Pibul who received his military training in France. These and many other appointments show that the People's Party has developed its hold on the country. To-day it is the only legal party. In 1935 there was an abortive royalist rebellion after which King Prajadhipok abdicated; since then the Assembly, elected but controlled by the People's Party, has been governed nominally by a regency acting for the ten-year-old successor of King Prajadhipok.

The rulers of Thailand since 1932 have placed a good deal of emphasis on economic self-sufficiency. When they took over, about 95 per cent. of the country's business was in foreign hands—the public debt was held in Great Britain; rice was controlled by the Chinese; whilst Europeans controlled the capital in the teak and rubber industries, and Chinese labour worked them. In 1939 the Thai Government passed a number of restrictive laws aimed at breaking the Chinese monopoly in a number of industries and occupations. In the last two years Japanese labour has penetrated the country to a certain extent, mainly on the construction of roads. Thailand is potentially important in Japan's economy; she could sell her rice (from 1929–32 before the embargo on rice, she supplied 85 per cent. of all Japan's rice imports), tin, teak and rubber. And, as Thailand becomes more industrialised her importance as a market for Japan's cheap manufactured goods increases.

But Japanese interest in Thailand for the moment is primarily strategic and political. An irredentist movement in Thailand from which the French Government of Indo-China seized two provinces at the end of the last century, provides a useful foothold for Japanese propaganda. The Thai nationalists have long claimed their rights to Cambodia and Laos (together covering a territory of about 50,000 square miles), but they were suddenly made with great vehemence just at the same time that Japan was bringing pressure to bear on Indo-China.

The collapse of France at once had repercussions in Thailand and in Indo-China. Thai troops were moved to certain points along the Mekong frontier, and trade between the countries in these districts came to a standstill. Two Frenchmen were expelled from the country in August on a charge of making defamatory statements. Japanese "tourists" found these two provinces of great interest and a Japanese "goodwill" mission visited Bangkok. Then in September the Thai Government formally demanded these territories on the borders of Indo-China. The Vichy Government refused and since that time incidents have happened along the frontiers and the Thai army and air force have combined to occupy most of the areas in dispute.

Parallel with these demands and incidents, the Japanese have exerted pressure on the Government in Indo-China. There is a strong pro-Japanese group in Bangkok and although the Thai have denied many times that there is any secret understanding between themselves and the Japanese, the parallel action by the Japanese in Hanoi and the Thai Government in Bangkok suggest an understanding. On the other hand, the most strategic moment at which to demand these frontier territories was just at the moment when the French Government in Indo-China reflected the weakness in Vichy.

Indo-China is vitally important for Japan's southwards expansion plans, and a fifth-column in Thailand obviously suits her purposes. Most of all she wants bases in Indo-China. Japanese naval authorities think in terms of a vast triangle its sides 2,000 miles long, based on Camranh Bay (which she has already demanded from the Indo-Chinese), her home ports and her mandated islands. Naval bases on the coast on the way from Camranh Bay to Singapore and air bases in the North of Thailand on the Burma front of Thailand would be useful to Japan. So far the Thailand Government denies that any such demands have been made. But the Thai and Indo-Chinese delegates are in Tokyo. After some two months fighting between the Thai and the Indo-Chinese, Mr. Matsuoka suggested that his good offices should be used in bringing about a settlement, stating at the same time that Japan couldn't allow any other country to meddle with such troubles or offer mediation independently of Japan. The French (who had refused a similar offer in November) and the Thai Government accepted his offer and armistice negotiations began on a Japanese battleship at Saigon on January 29th. The Armistice agreement was soon signed, and representatives of the two countries proceeded to Tokyo to discuss a settlement of the frontier dispute.

The Indo-Chinese delegates are in a weak position; unless Vichy's refusal to accept Japan's plan for a settlement of the Thai-Indo-Chinese dispute has more substance than one would now think possible. The Thai delegates are anxious to maintain their independence and to be neutral in the situation which they see developing in the Pacific. The Thai Government signed a Treaty of Non-Aggression with the United Kingdom last June (and with France), undertaking "not to resort in any case either to war or to any act of violence or of aggression against the other, either alone, or in concert with one, or more than one, third Power, and to respect the territorial integrity of the other" and, by Article 2 they agreed that if one of them were "the object of an act of war or of aggression" the other would undertake "not to give either directly or indirectly, aid to or assistance to the aggressor." A Bangkok communique issued on February 16th reaffirmed the maintenance of friendly relations between Britain and Thailand. With Japan, the Thai Government have a treaty of amity (signed on December 24th), by which they agreed to respect each other's territorial integrity and to consult on all questions of common interest for a five-year period.

British mines round Singapore, the arrival of Australian troops and American bombing machines may very easily alter the balance of forces in the Pacific. Already a Thai official, speaking off the record to a *Times* correspondent, said last week that Thailand was not only not willing but was not even discussing the question of leasing bases to Japan and that "Thai forces would offer the maximum possible resistance to any effort by Japan—or for that matter any other Power—to make use of Thai territory for war-like purposes."

That Japan will play every card to persuade Thailand to break this neutrality is certain. British and American policy might strengthen the hands of those in Thailand who have watched the results of Japan's "new order" among the Chinese people to whom they are racially related and the part played by small nations like themselves in Europe who have been the victims of the Nazi "new order." On the other hand, it is the United States and the British Empire which have made it possible for Japan to continue the war against China, and British policy has consistently suppressed India's millions whilst Dutch policy has drained the Netherlands East Indies for three centuries of most of its wealth.

So Thailand, like many other small countries finds itself between the devil of Axis imperialism and the deep sea of Anglo-American imperialism, and little by little is dragged into this struggle. But for the sake of her own independence and the future stability of the Far East, she will be ill-advised, to say the least, if she accepts a bribe to-day from a country that would certainly enslave her to-morrow.

DOROTHY WOODMAN

POOR MADAM BUTTERFLY

[Japan has the heart of a dove; she is anxious to lay the egg of peace, but Britain and America have placed the snake's eggs of Singapore and Guam in the nest.—Japanese Army spokesman, Shanghai, February 21st.]

AGGRIEVED by vile suspicion
Japan, a harmless dove,
Fulfils her heaven-sent mission
And marks out zones of love.
That wide Pacific spaces
Be saved from war's caprice
She yearns in steel-ringed bases
To lay her eggs of peace.

Her innocence deluded
By Talks in Tokyo,
Too long she cooed and brooded
Within the *status quo*;
Though on the Road to Burma
She laid in Craigie's hand,
Her need for *terra firma*
White Powers misunderstand.

Within her crowded island
She finds no room to lay,
A peace egg laid in Thailand
Is almost laid away;
While snakes' eggs hatched in Britain
Her nesting hopes destroy,
She is by China bitten,
Encircled by Hanoi.

Whites should be wiped like vermin
From Oceania's map,
Except, of course, the German
(An honorary Jap)
For, favours past forgotten,
Her love-call they decry,
They say her egg is rotten.
Poor Madam Butterfly! SAGITTARIUS

A LONDON DIARY

A CURIOUS and, I am told, unprecedented situation arose a fortnight ago at the Oxford Union, when the House debated a motion that a return to God through organised religion is essential to the reconstruction of the world after the war. For this motion there spoke Canon Grensted, Sir Francis Younghusband, and a prodigious number of undergraduates; against it C. E. M. Joad, and an equally prodigious number of undergraduates. Before the debate took place, however, the Vice-Chancellor had received representations from influential quarters that the debate should be disallowed. Suppose that the motion were lost and that its loss proclaimed to the world that Oxford had "gone Godless"! Would the effects be less appalling than the news—announced, by the way, just a fortnight before the Nazis burnt the Reichstag and changed the face of Europe—that Oxford had gone pacifist and decided not again to fight for King and Country? Think of the rejoicing in enemy country, the dismay throughout the Empire, the shocked alarm of Americans! The thing simply would not bear contemplation. It was, accordingly, decided to permit the debate, but to abstain from the recording of votes, presumably, on the principle adopted by the wife of a Canon of Worcester Cathedral who received the announcement of the theory of Evolution with the remark: "Descended from apes! My dear, we will hope it is not true. But if it is, let us pray that it may not become generally known." The fact that votes were not to be recorded was not communicated to the undergraduates, who trooped as usual through the Aye and the No lobbies in the belief that they were casting their votes for and against the motion. But the joke, as it turned out, was on the authorities; for I am told that a considerable majority of the would-be voters did in fact pass through the Aye lobby! I find it hard to believe that if this result had been anticipated the recording of votes would have been banned; equally hard not to deplore the mistake of judgment which prevented so signal a victory for the forces of religion from being announced throughout the length and breadth of the civilised world.

* * *

A friend of mine who heard Hitler's speech the other day assures me that the Führer made no such statement as that "Marxism" and Nazi-ism were much of a muchness. He said "Fascism," not Marxism. The mistake was made by one of the agencies and appeared only, I think, in two papers. My friend tells me that Hitler's speech was a quieter affair than usual. Even when he was threatening us with the U-boat campaign, he did not prophesy immediate success or scream threats at us. He spoke of us in Britain rather as a foolish obstruction, which prevented him from completing his good work. He made a crack about Lord Ironside of Archangel (the title was Lord Ironside's own incredible joke, not Hitler's). Lord Ironside, he said, once made a remark about the youth of German Generals; now even the British had had to superannuate him—perhaps, Hitler suggested, because he was not old enough. Hitler used a lot of weapons, my friend remarked, but they were all rather blunt. When he was talking about his close friendship with Mussolini and the way he always sticks to his allies, you could almost hear the "wink in his voice."

* * *

Official sanction given to the "Free" German daily newspaper, *Die Zeitung*, to be published in London, is one of the instances in which Mr. Churchill's Government has pleasantly replied to critics who accuse it of being merely Conservative and unimaginative. It is worth thinking back to the rabid German-baiting days of 1914 to 1918 to realise the full significance of the change. *Die Zeitung*, which will begin publication in March under the managing editorship of J. H. Lothar, a widely experienced German newspaperman, and at one time managing director of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in its famous Liberal days, will not be connected with any of the former German political parties nor any political group among the emigrants. On the contrary, those Germans connected with the enterprise hope it may prove the start of a *new* reorganisation of German anti-Nazi forces in this country. The appointment, as political editor, of Sebastian Haffner, the young German writer who has recently made a big name for himself with his penetrating studies of Nazi mentality, *Germany—Jekyll and Hyde* and *Offensive Against Germany*, is of especial interest. Mr. Haffner has suggested somewhere that just as the Nazis created "the Jewish problem," "the Sudeten problem," "the Danzig problem," so the Nazis themselves can be turned into a "problem" in the German mind if Britain recognises an organised group of "Free" Germans—writers, economists and politicians. We should announce that they are working out the possibilities of peaceful collaboration between eighty million Germans and the British Commonwealth, the United States, and other countries to come into effect once the "problem of the Nazis" is removed from the path. Once identify the present German regime with such a "Nazi problem," Mr. Haffner suggests, and at the right moment, British propaganda might sweep through the German mind. The appearance of the "Free" German newspaper may be a genuine step towards such a policy.

* * *

I should like to know Sir Robert Vansittart's views about this German paper written by Germans for Germans. Of course, I know that he admits in *Black Record* that there are exceptional Germans who are not beyond redemption, but the conception of co-operation with Germans for victory does not appear in his book, nor seem to follow from its argument. If he were indeed a private person expressing his own views, as Lord Cranborne seemed to suggest in defence of the publication of *Black Record*, I should like to persuade Sir Robert to review *Help Us Germans to Beat the Germans*, by Heinrich Fraenkel—a recent addition to the Gollancz victory series, which first elaborated the same thesis in "100,000,000 Allies—If We Choose." The *Times*, in a remarkably happy leader, pointed out that on Lord Cranborne's showing there is apparently no reason why any member of the Civil Service, "from the highest to the lowest, should not publish his personal opinion on matters, however delicate and difficult, with which he is appointed to deal officially." But that position was turned by the information that Sir Robert was personally blameless, since he obtained the permission of Lord Halifax before broadcasting. Which, of course, only makes matters worse, because it argues an official policy of war against the Germans and not against Fascism. Now it seems we are back at the more hopeful conception. But contradictory propaganda cancels itself out.

* * *

A correspondent writes: "May I endorse your remarks about Bulgaria last week? Nearly ten years ago I attended an official banquet given in Sofia on the occasion of the visit of some prominent British business men, where the Minister of Commerce, I remember, made the usual suggestion in his speech—that if only a tiny admixture of Bulgarian tobacco could be added to the ordinary English cigarette, the economic benefit in Bulgaria would be immense. Surely additional imports of a few hundred thousand pounds could not matter to wealthy Britain! Suddenly he broke into direct appeal: 'Nobody thinks of poor Bulgaria,' he cried. 'We are only a small country of seven million, and we are nearly all poor. But when you go back to London, don't forget us. Please don't forget Bulgaria altogether!' Well, of course, the story of how the British Tobacco Trusts refused for various reasons to take up Turkish and Bulgarian tobacco is now forgotten. Twenty years of British economic neglect of the Balkans cannot be wiped out by one remark in a speech by Mr. Churchill. But one point should be noted. Not merely a handful of rich merchants or exporters were affected. Bulgaria is a nation. Go down into the broad Maritsa valley, where, according to the inhabitants, the best and certainly one of the most famous tobaccos in the world is grown, and you will see multitudes of smallholders' farms everywhere organised into co-operatives whose style of buildings gives the villages quite a markedly Russian look. It is the managers and selling agents of these peasant co-operatives—*which really means these peasants themselves*—who for years have seen themselves forced to deal only with Germans, while the wealthy British tobacco trusts have, as it were, turned their backs upon them and become a market out of reach.

* * *

I first met Henry Morris at Cambridge not long after the war. He was already an educational enthusiast and, unlike most of us, concentrated in his determination to achieve practical results. He would have nothing to do with politics: no committees and back-scratching for him. He became education officer for Cambridgeshire and began the heartbreaking task of persuading the authorities, from the Board of Education downwards, to sanction his scheme for village universities. In seventeen years of unavoidable committees

and unobtrusive politics he succeeded in doing what he set out to do, which is more than most of us can say for ourselves about the gap between the two wars. He built four village centres or universities: I was much impressed by one I saw some years ago. The fourth, at Impington, was completed just before the war started. It is a really magnificent place; a lovely piece of architecture designed by Gropius (who is one of the most generous of Hitler's presents to us). In spite of the blackout problem in a building made largely of glass, this Centre or "University" is used by three hundred and more people every night. Young people and adults use it from all the villages round about; it is a cinema, a theatre, a library, a school, a lecture centre, an athletic club and a centre for every kind of communal activity. There is no reason in the world, except the shortage of men like Henry Morris and the great inertia of a social system, why groups of villages all over England should not have such a centre. Anyway, Impington is one of the things that makes democracy real and worth fighting for.

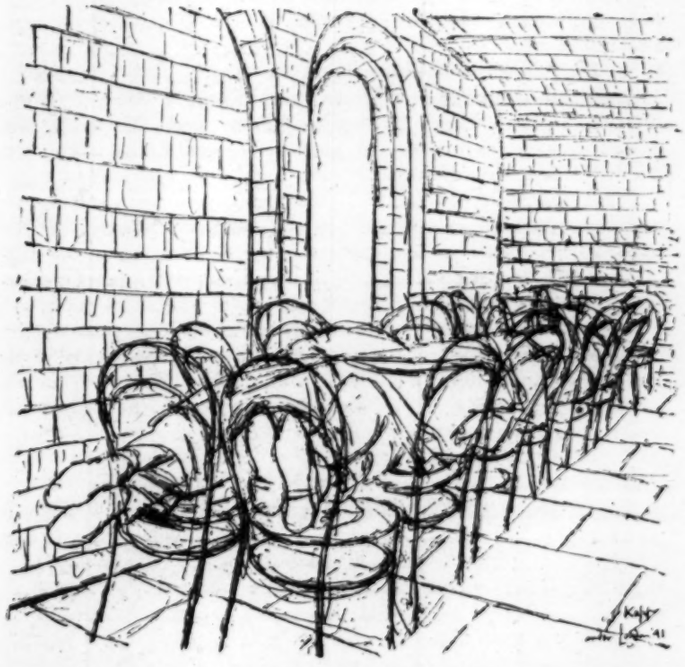
* * *

Every week with great regularity, and so far without loss, American pilots steer their great Clipper planes across the Atlantic to Lisbon. They still make the crossing in something under two days. Yet between the posting of a letter in New York or Baltimore and its delivery in London there may now elapse no less than six weeks: the usual interval is four weeks. I have before me a bundle of envelopes which establish this disgraceful record. The blame, it is apparent, falls on the censor. Letters arrive in the wrong order, which suggests that some censors clear their piles faster than others. Apparently the censors who deal with letters from America in the German language are fairly business-like: these letters get through in a fortnight. But for this sorry service the Postmaster-General has still the effrontery to charge *2s. 6d.* per ounce.

* * *

Mr. Park was talking to me about fruit trees. The people who tell you that it is still safe to plant them in March are prompted, in his view, either by ignorance or by a desire to sell off surplus stock. He explained that the sap is rising by March; instead of having the winter to settle down into the earth as they have if you plant them in November, they only just begin to get established when the summer comes, and if the season is dry "you mostly lose them all." This seemed good sense. Then he said: "Why, you can tell when the sap's rising. Did you see the mist that came up this morning?" I had indeed. The bright sunshine had suddenly disappeared; a spring haze came over everything. "That," said Mr. Park, "is the sap rising. That's what they all say round here, and I've seen it's true." I recounted this piece of local lore to Mrs. X, my neighbour. "Well," she said, "I went into our shed a few days ago and as I got to the door the gardener called out: 'Don't come in, I'm in trouble.' But it was only his shoe and sock he had off. He was squashing a slug on his toe. He declared that it was a sovereign remedy for corns."

CRITIC



Sanctuary (Shelterers in a Church Crypt).

Asleep in Leicester Square Tube Station.

A KAPP SUPPLEMENT

NEXT week we are happy to be able to reproduce a series of Kapp's drawings of Shelter Life. These impressions may help those who have not seen the subterranean night life of London to realise its atmosphere.

Most of these drawings are the property of the Crown, Kapp having been commissioned by the Ministry of Information to make studies of shelter life. It is remarkable that the State, which in peacetime spent much money on training artists but none on keeping them alive, should now at last be giving commissions for large numbers of paintings and drawings and making them available to the public. Apart from the exhibition at the National Gallery, there are three Exhibitions of War Artists arranged by the same committee, on show in the provinces and one in the United States. Moreover, paintings are now being exhibited in towns all over the country where paintings have never previously been seen. With the assistance of the Government and of the Pilgrim Trust the Institute of Adult Education has also sent "on the road," like a touring company, six excellently chosen exhibitions. For the first time the State has recognised that it is not only after his death that an artist becomes valuable to the community.

The committee responsible for commissioning the official War Artists, of which the Director of the National Gallery is Chairman, has rightly been catholic in its choice; and the results are correspondingly uneven. Curiously, it is in portraiture—once the great strength of the English school—that the painters working for the Ministry of Information have been least successful. But the enterprise has fully justified itself, if only by Stanley Spenser's *Riveters*, the ruined townscapes of Graham Sutherland and John Piper, the Shelter drawings of Henry Moore. Confronted with shelter life, Kapp, Henry Moore, Topolski and Ardizzone have expressed their experiences very variously, and that is natural in an age when every good artist arrives at great individuality of vision. Henry Moore has found admirably sculptural groups, tragic as figures from Greek or Northern legend; Topolski, favouring baroque scribbles with a touch of Daumier, has insisted on the picturesque; Ardizzone discovers in the shelters, as everywhere else, the grossness and fleshly gusto that he finds congenial; while Kapp, more than the others, recognises the sordid lugubriousness of his subject. But even he has not given the impression of the shelter as it first appeared—a refuse heap with human beings diminished into an untidy confusion of empty tins and bits of orange peel.

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to Amy Townley.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Japan has a fine tradition of honour, which has hitherto extended to her international dealings.—*Sunday Times.*

A clergyman's duty is to teach religion, and one of his primary tasks is therefore to proclaim "Love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the King." The average pacifist does not care a tinker's curse for the brotherhood of the British Empire.—Correspondent in *Daily Telegraph.*

Organised games and sport are still a most important part of army training. Hunting has been a valuable training for former cavalry officers now serving in armoured units.—*Daily Telegraph.*

The Chairman of the Finance Committee, who recommended Leach's dismissal, said there were no conscientious objectors allowed in the Old Testament, and they should not be allowed in these days.—*Daily Herald.*

WASHINGTON THINKS ALOUD

WHAT is being decided by the marathon debates now proceeding at Washington is not merely the fate of Bill H.R.1776, called by the New York wits "the blank-cheque, lend-lease, all-out, garden-hose bill" (that, it is generally conceded, is not in doubt), but the fitness of a democracy to survive in a world dominated by whirling-dervishes.

Whatever opinions may be held concerning the methods proposed for meeting the coming emergency—and whether what is transpiring beside the Potomac River is "a study in slow-motion" (as Administration supporters declare), or "an attempt to bum's rush the American people into a dictatorship" (as Isolationists aver)—there is general agreement that the policy of all-aid to Britain represents not only the last desperate chance to keep war away from the Americas, but the final opportunity for democracy to prove that the faceless men are wrong, and that the British-American alliance can beat the totalitarians.

The split-mentality observable in the U.S. throughout 1940—the desire to furnish Britain all-aid while yet keeping out of war—is on the way to being resolved by the sheer inescapable pressure of events. As the American people ponder over Mr. Hull's statement that: "Were Britain to lose command of the seas, Germany could easily cross the Atlantic"; Colonel Knox's: "If England is destroyed we will be attacked," and Mr. Stimson's: "We will face a crisis by the middle of April," signs accumulate that what Mark Sullivan, in the *New York Herald Tribune*, calls "this American mass schizophrenia" is on the wane. Joseph P. Kennedy is not the only American who needs no alibi for changing his opinions.

The run-of-the-mill Yankee may still declare "the tom-tom beaters and medicine-men at Washington are edging towards war." The redoubtable Hugh Johnson may still label Dorothy Thompson a "breast-beating Boadicea" and Senator Burton K. Wheeler, an idealist Pacifist and the most skilled prosecutor the Senate has seen in a generation, may declare on the radio that the Administration is hellbent for war. Publicists may gag, in the Press, about North America being "a large body of land bounded on the south by Mexico, the north by Canada, the west by the Pacific, and the east by Administration whims." And journalistic jokesmiths may inquire: "If it is costing us twenty-five billion dollars just to stay out of this war, what's the cost of admission to the fight?"

But facts are apt to be stubborn things. And neither the shouts of the queer caravan of Isolationists and appeasers, Bundists and Coughlinites, Republicans and Communists and sincere idealists which opposes the bill, nor the slickest journalism on earth, can longer conceal the fact that the hour is late, or neutralise the effect of Mr. Secretary Knox's devastating arithmetic (long concealed here) proving that if anything should happen to the British Navy, the pooled shipyard resources of the Axis could outbuild Uncle Sam seven to one.

Which explains why the Opposition, loyal and otherwise, has lost the ear of America, and why the lease-lend Bill will go through with minor amendments—despite vocal opposition, despite a $17,500,000,000 war-budget which events will probably double, despite widespread public dislike of any further concentration of power in the hands of the statesman known here as "the Champ" and "Mr. Big." The Bill will become law before the winter storms moderate in the English Channel for the simple and cogent reason that there is no visible alternative except one which the U.S. is not prepared to contemplate.

Meanwhile, the real problems filling the minds of Americans make the discussions proceeding at Washington slightly academic. Americans, having decided England must be helped, dismissed that subject as settled and moved on to others—such as will U.S. warships be needed for convoy duty if the Battle of the Atlantic is to be won? How much aid can the U.S. send *immediately*—in time to assist England in the attack now visibly coming within a matter of weeks? And can the U.S. expect to beat Hitler while spending only 20 per cent. of its national income on armaments (as planned for 1941) compared with Germany's 50 per cent.? Above all, could America any longer hold back from *any* step needed to ensure that if this country must fight, it fights with Britain and not alone?

These are the questions which Washington is asking "off the record." They are labelled "dynamite" here, but answered they must be and before long. For this conflict is now universally recognised here as a second world war. A second world war which this nation can fight in one of three ways. At second-hand, through Britain. In collaboration with the British Empire in actual combat. Or alone. But fight and win in one way or another America must if the American way of life is not to be destroyed by that atavistic "wave of the future." And if those brave words spoken by American leaders are not to boomerang against this nation. Wherefore America is in a "do-or-die" mood, and the 333 square miles of New York City will be experiencing its first test black-out about the time these lines are read.

The enterprising Mr. Secretary Hull having ingeniously devised the policy of "self-defence" to replace the discarded policy of Unneutral neutrality (and the U.S. having become the economic G.H.Q. of the Allies), the colossus of the West has reached the penultimate stop on the road leading to a showdown. Ahead lies only full intervention. The justification of the President's policy (and in the considered opinion of this writer Mr. Roosevelt is genuinely desirous of taking his place in history as the President who kept this country out of physical participation in the conflict) lies in the fact that if—with American material, economic and diplomatic aid—Great Britain can destroy Hitlerism, the doughboys now filling America's training camps will not be needed. But the chance grows ever slimmer, and this country has ceased alike to expect miracles from its Chief Executive, or to regard war as a game of marbles, from which one can withdraw at any given stage. And the average American has dark suspicions that those sweeping powers for which the President asks are going to be needed before our world is much older.

"We cannot afford to win the battle of production only to have our victory nullified by the loss of the battle of transportation," declares Major George Fielding Elliot, in the *New York Herald Tribune*—pointing out that while war material retained in the United States is useful to this country, and war material landed in England is even more useful to the democratic cause, war material at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean is a net loss to both nations. Wherefore Americans (having been told for months that any decision to help ferry the stuff over would mark the dividing line between peace and war) are to-day realistically facing the fact that the lend-lease proposal is only the opening shot in the new world war which has arrived. More—many more—freighters, plus warships to help convoy the stuff across will, it is confidently expected, become an inescapable necessity before many weeks have passed, if time is to be bought for the new and reconditioned shipyards of the United States to begin turning out the merchant armada which is now on order.

Washington points out "off the record" that a little simple arithmetic proves conclusively that a continuance of the present rate of sea-losses—not to mention any acceleration—will by the late spring make it impossible for Britain, unaided, to ferry over munitions at the present rate of production, let alone to find additional cargo-space to transport the vastly-augmented supplies which will become available here as the year unfolds. The dilemma is inescapable; either the U.S. will have to help, whatever the cost to American susceptibilities, or sit still while Hitler defeats Washington's avowed policy of all-out aid.

The United States, however, is not overlooking another possibility—that Hitler, engaged in his final gamble against England, may consider that Washington is worth a thought. And decide that as he is risking his regime in any case, it would be a smart thing to manœuvre the U.S. into total war, on the calculation that if he wins against Britain this spring, American belligerency can do him no harm, and if he doesn't, well, America or no America, he'll be on the way out without waiting for his hat. Hitler may argue that an America at war might sidetrack a good slice of its intended aid to Britain at the crucial moment, in response to popular clamour, for the defence of North America. While the resultant confusion might be increased by widespread sabotage within the U.S. and a diversion staged by the well-drilled fifth columns in Latin America. A contingency not lost sight of by members of the Roosevelt Administration when they speak

of "the drastic and imminent character of the emergency." No contingency, down to an aerial attack on New York City without warning, has been overlooked.

These are the vital issues facing Washington to-day; all else is make-believe and stage-thunder. They are what Mayor La Guardia of New York City was thinking about when he instructed New Yorkers to abandon their cars and take cover if enemy bombers are seen. And what the city of Milwaukee was thinking when it recruited the first city-wide band of A.R.P. wardens in the U.S. They are what Isolationists are secretly dreading as they fight a Canute-like rearguard action to hold off the relentless tide of history. They are the considerations President Roosevelt had in mind when he declared "It will never be earlier."

For the inescapable fact, underlined by every statement made by members of the Administration since the dawn of 1941, is that the second world war of our day has begun—and the United States is in it. That conflict began on January 6th, on the day when an American President, facing a joint-session of Congress, pledged the full resources of the greatest democracy would be available in the fight against the architects of the phoney New Order.

From that moment Cleveland became as much a belligerent city as Coventry. History had taken command. Democracy could fail to vindicate itself only at its own peril. If at this moment there is, as reported, four main schools of thought in Congress on the lease-lend Bill (and several minor schools of thought), what of it? What matters is that there is emphatically no support to be found on Capitol Hill for a "lie-down-and-die" philosophy. HESSELL TILTMAN

EDUCATION IN THE ARMY

EVERY unit in the British Army—every battalion, battery and similar formation—has been ordered by the War Office to provide itself with a Unit Education Officer. He is an officer already serving in the unit, and his new job does not release him from his ordinary military duties. This is the man on whom the troops depend, in the last resort, for the quantity and palatability of their educational rations. Above him are organisers and co-ordinators by the hundred; but in that vast delta of administration the Unit Education Officer is the only channel that matters to the serving soldier. On the whole, Commanding Officers have picked the right men for the jobs. Their choice, for instance, has not inevitably fallen upon a subaltern: there are hundreds of units in which a captain has been picked, there are scores in which the second-in-command is acting as Education Officer. It would have been wise to include N.C.O.s in the field of choice, for, as every soldier knows, a capable and experienced sergeant can often get things done more effectively than a newly joined "one-pip." There are cases, of course, in which a sceptical or indifferent C.O. has been content to assign this important office to a nitwit who has been found wanting in other duties, but on the whole it is true to say that C.O.s have not only welcomed the Army Education Scheme, but have taken pains to put good officers in the key positions.

Where does this Unit Education Officer get the educational rations for his men? The first source is the civilian lecture system provided by the numerous Regional Committees for Adult Education in the Forces. These Committees are made up of the usual peacetime providers of Advanced Education—University Extra-Mural Depts., the W.E.A., the Local Education Authorities, etc.—and they supply panels of experienced lecturers on every subject under the sun. The Unit Education Officer has access to these panels, through a simple liaison provided by the Army Educational Corps, and he can be sure of getting a lecture a week by a speaker who not only knows how to talk but who can also handle questions and discussion afterwards. The Adult Education movement has put its back into this job, and the Army is well pleased with the stuff it gets from this valuable source. But for many reasons the Army must supplement this "imported" ration. Many units are difficult to reach; the supply of civilian lecturers was only just enough to go round in peacetime for an aggregate audience of 100,000 a year; the Army shifts about, the Army works and plays at inconvenient hours, the Army may go overseas. It seemed imperative, therefore, that units should seek home-produced education to augment the imported product. This purpose is the very heart and kernel of the War Office pamphlet on "Education in the Wartime Army." It is based on the belief that, in this modern Army, there are thousands of officers and men able and willing to forego some of their spare time to giving talks and leading discussion groups in their units. To discover and utilise this amateur talent is the business of the Unit Education Officer, very often aided by a small unit committee of all ranks. By combing his unit records, by nosing around and bustling about, he is already discovering, on an encouraging scale, the men who can edify and interest their comrades. Typical discoveries of this sort are architects who can talk on town-planning, town councillors who can explain local government, commercial artists who can vamp up in others a talent for drawing, journalists who are knowledgeable about foreign affairs, University students who can sign-post the way to literary appreciation. The volume of this unit talent is considerable, although its incidence is uneven. There are units so well-off that they can lend their spare talent to their neighbours; and there are units which can scarcely raise a volunteer to talk about the most simple hobby.

The other main source, on a more organised and purposeful scale, is that willing horse the Local Education Authority. Where their technical institutes are handy they are thrown open, at no cost to the men, to those who want to initiate or brush-up a course in some commercial or technical subject. The text-books and the apparatus are put freely at the men's disposal, and the Army provides transport within a twenty-mile radius to take troops into the neighbouring towns for such courses. This is a service distinct from and additional to the help which L.E.A.s give through their representation on Regional Committees, additional, as well, to the considerable and indispensable aid the L.E.A.s give to Army education through the services of their County Libraries. Many other auxiliaries lend the Army a hand—such as the Rural Music Schools, C.E.M.A., the British Drama League, the British Council; and, by and large, the Unit Officer setting out with his shopping-basket has many helpful and well-stocked retailers at his service.

His duty is not only to supply a demand, however, but to organise it. By inquiry within the unit—or by the display of appetising samples—he soon gets to know what his men would like. And by comparing this list of "wants" with his catalogue of available supplies he usually reaches an acceptable compromise. He can't stock everything, he can't procure everything, but by scrounging and improvising he often manages to provide a programme which attracts a 50 per cent. approval from his unit. There are, indeed, many units in which half or three-quarters of the men voluntarily attend lectures and classes. And if that figure were very much less it would still outrange the massed membership of all forms of adult education in peacetime. The Army is taking to education on a scale which far exceeds the most sanguine prognostications.

Attendance at all classes and courses under the Army Education Scheme is voluntary. Often enough the C.O. parades the men for the initial meeting, because he holds the reasonable view that, whether they want it or not, they are "damn well going to hear what it's all about." But, except for odd cases of misconception or misplaced zeal, there is no parading for classes. They are held, of course, after duty hours, yet during last month no fewer than 3,427 set lectures were given in this country apart from 2,400 classes and numerous meetings of informal groups, hobby-clubs, music and drama circles and the like.

The device of question-and-answer may relieve the heavy texture of all this chronicling of fact.

1. Q. *Is there a censorship on lectures?*

A. Emphatically "no." The panel-lecturers of the Regional Committees, all men and women of experience in adult education, deliver precisely the same sort of talk as they do to W.E.A. classes and University Extension classes. These panels include, incidentally, the names of many well-known Leftish lecturers.

2. Q. *Do you ask us to believe that Colonel Blueface takes it all lying down?*

A. No, he doesn't. He has made some apoplectic protests, based, as a rule, on a misrepresentation of what the lecturer said. But in peacetime Alderman Blueface made similar scenes from time to time on the strength of a rumour that a lecturer had said something naughty at a W.E.A. meeting. Alderman Blueface wanted to "cut the grant" to the offending educational body; his cousin, the Colonel, wants to "take the fellow's permit away." Until recently he occasionally managed to do so. To-day he cannot do so until the facts have been investigated by the Regional Committee, whose chairman is usually the Vice-Chancellor of the local University.

3. Q. *But I know a Gunner at —— Camp who hasn't heard a word about this scheme. . . .?*

A. I know a Trade Unionist in —— who has never heard of the Workers' Educational Association and doesn't know he could get a bursary to Ruskin College. Has the gunner bothered about it?

4. Q. *Does all this Army education come up to the high standard of adult education in peacetime?*

A. No, it certainly doesn't, and it isn't aiming to. The exacting standards of peacetime adult education, after decades of endeavour and after considerable expenditure of public funds, appeal to something like 20,000 people a year in University Extension and University Tutorial classes, and to an additional 80,000 in W.E.A. classes, L.E.A. Institutes, etc. The percentage of serious student-interest cannot be expected to reach higher dimensions in an army of 2½ million men. Army education is operating at many levels: a few highbrow, but mainly lowbrow. Why not?

5. Q. *Ought not education for, say, six hours per week to be a regular and compulsory part of Army training?*

A. There is a very strong case for the proposal, especially as most of the troops left school at fourteen. The soldier who is proficient in general knowledge and powers of reasoning, as well as in the use of his weapons, is the better all-round soldier. There could easily be devised a minimum standard curriculum of, say, World Affairs, Spoken and Written English, Science in Every-day Life. Many military men already favour such a compulsory scheme. The present voluntary scheme could still continue—for the men who are beyond the elementary stage of education. The difficulties would be, at the moment, with long days and nights of field-training ahead, to find six extra hours in the week, and to mobilise and train enough capable instructors. But, as a long-term policy, compulsory education is gaining ground, and anyway it will have to be applied as soon as demobilisation begins.

The administration of this scheme, on the Army side, is in the hands of the Army Educational Corps—under an experienced civilian Director from the Board of Education. This small body of officers and warrant-officers comprises the hierarchy through which the Unit Education Officers are supplied and advised. There are Command Education Officers, Area Education Officers and Divisional Education Officers. These are full-time specialists, comparable to the administrative side of an L.E.A. or a University Extra-Mural Department.

When the A.E.C. was enlarged a little time ago there was an avalanche of applications for it; yet, until recently, the A.E.C. was the least-regarded and least-requited service in the British Army. After the last war many of the keenest young officers and sergeants transferred to the A.E.C. They did so because they believed in the gospel according to Gorell. That faith has since cost them both prestige and promotion. It dwindled into the drudgery of coaching recruits for army certificates; it exacted long years of service in India and elsewhere; it left men of fifty with nothing but a paltry captaincy to show for twenty years of devoted schoolmastering. These are the officers who now take administrative control of the new scheme—and they are proving to be as capable and zealous a crowd as anyone could hope for. They have not been frustrated by two decades of obscurity; they have laid their legitimate grievances aside, and they are putting long hours and much organising skill into their new chance. What is more, they recognise the difference between army schoolmastering of the old style and this vast new network of cultural facilities. Many of them are men of real intellectual quality, and they have nothing to learn of the game from their civilian equivalents.

The A.E.C. has recently been enlarged; and among the men who have gone into it are ex-L.E.A. officials, ex-W.E.A. tutors, ex-schoolmasters, and so on. The Corps can, indeed, be regarded now as a very expert and enthusiastic collection of educational administrators. In privilege and prestige they are not so well favoured as, let us say, the chaplains, and they are far more overworked than the clerics. It is possible, for instance, to find a military hospital on the staff of which there are three chaplains but not even an educational warrant-officer. Finally, on my rough reckoning, the total cost of Army education to the country is about 2*s.* 6*d.* a head. It's cheap at the price, and it deserves a run for its money.

One resolution which the watchdogs of education in this country might make is to determine that, after this war, the A.E.C. is not once more allowed to become an Army drudge. Military honours are won on the battlefield, and the A.E.C. has already, in this war, done enough to earn the prefix "Royal" and perhaps a motto as well. Just as one celebrated regiment uses the watch-word "Do or die," so the A.E.C. might adopt some such inscription as "Learn and Live." These little things count in the Army; and if the A.E.C. becomes the R.A.E.C., it will be all the better for it. And if its senior officers can hope for a higher rank than that of Lieut.-Colonel, they will find that extra ounce of incentive which counts for so much in military life.

There are in the new scheme facilities upon which there is no room to touch here, such as the Correspondence Courses, the musical and artistic activities. There are also anomalies and imperfections of the kind which are inevitable in a massive new and unlubricated machine. There have been unwarrantable delays in the development of the scheme, and the third winter of the war will be on us before Army Education is in full production. The A.E.C. is not a quarter as big as it ought to be. All that is spilt milk. The points which deserve the attention of all liberal-minded citizens are these: that the military mandarins are friendly to Army education, that the full strength of civilian adult education has been generously lent to the Army, that the Army is developing its own cultural resources, and that the A.E.C. is as ardent and reliable an administrative body as the war has produced. All that Army Education needs is a chance to deliver the goods—a chance which will multiply during the long, tedious process of ultimate demobilisation. Our generation has seen no greater educational opportunity than this, and one sign of our moral advantage over the Germans and the Russians is that this job is left to teachers and not to commissars. For there is not a penn'orth of propaganda in the Army Education Scheme.

A later article will describe in illustrative detail some ways in which this ambitious but promising scheme is working in various kinds of units.

W. E. WILLIAMS

SHOULD KISSING ON THE STAGE BE STOPPED?

THIS was the title of an article I wrote—and got published in a weekly paper—in the early years of the present century. Some readers may have thought that it was the last cry of the last Puritan in a world in which Puritanism seemed to be dying at a much faster rate than the second King Charles. But, though I am a Puritan by descent, I do not think it was the dwindling stream of Puritan blood in my veins that was mainly responsible for my challenge to Edwardian civilisation. I should probably never have written the article but for the fact that I was deeply in love with a beautiful young actress and could not bear the thought of her being embraced, even in makebelieve, as I had seen some young actresses being embraced by actors, whom I regarded as bounders, on the stage. I should not have minded so much if the actor had been Henry Irving or Forbes Robertson or Charles Wyndham or George Alexander. This was not because these actors were at the head of their profession, but because, if they did have to kiss an actress in the course of a play, they were usually content with the merest peck. They never went into a clinch as so many heavyweight boxers do till the referee dances up to them, touches them on the shoulders, and cries "Break!"

Some of the minor stars of the profession, however, were already imbued with Continental ideas of realism; and Continental ideas, though sometimes good, are usually things to beware of. I remember in particular seeing one repellent-looking actor embracing a young actress in a manner more like that of an all-in-wrestler than of the Galahad I wanted all actors to be. The spectacle seemed to me as odious as if Miranda had been hugged by Caliban. I should have liked to shoot the man if I had had a gun, and had known how to use a gun, and had been sure that I should not be punished for it. Being a minimus dramatic critic at the time, I might at least have hissed. (I have hissed only once in a theatre, by the way, but I had paid for my stall and twelve-and-sixpence is the price of privilege.) On my way home from the theatre, however, boiling with indignation behind my made-up tie against the morals and manners of the modern theatre, I decided to write an uncompromising article entitled "Should Kissing on the Stage Be Stopped?"

I did not, of course, explain in my article that it had its origin in jealousy. Philosophers do not as a rule begin by confessing that they have personal reasons for being so passionately convinced of the truth of their theories. Nietzsche did, I think, but he was madder than most. As for me, I looked round for impersonal reasons for the prohibition of stage kissing. I said to myself that the spectacle of a man and woman kissing in real life is not a thing that one stops and stares at. If one sees two lovers embracing, unless one is a Peeping Tom, one instinctively leaves them to themselves and passes on without looking at them again: to look at them would be as embarrassing to oneself as it would be to them, or might be if they were conscious of the outside world. There is a modesty at the heart of human nature which forbids men to pry on their fellows at certain moments—some of them important moments—in their lives. And this modesty, I told myself, was what made men in the gallery of the theatre on Saturday nights, when they had drunk perhaps a little too much porter, turn every kiss on the stage into a

scene for ribald laughter. Let a hero kiss a heroine in those days—even the slightest peck—and a number of Guinness-is-good-for-you boys would be sure to begin making kissing noises in the gallery and so, amid the laughter of their fellow-galleryites, destroying whatever emotional interest there was in the scene. I have occasionally said, "Sh-sh!" at such times, but it was no good—not in Belfast on Saturday night. Freud may have had an explanation for this, but I am sure he was wrong. I think that the Belfast Saturday-nighters were right and that they knew by instinct that, though kissing is not a matter for derision, it is a private matter and the less seen of it in public the better.

Naturally, however, I could not base my theory of prohibitionism entirely on the behaviour of the gallery in the Belfast Opera House on Saturday nights. Like everybody else in search of an æsthetic theory, I had to go back to the Greeks. I had only an idle apprentice's acquaintance with the Greeks, but I had read that there were certain things which they regarded as improper for representation on the stage. Murders, for example—unless I am mistaken, which is not only possible but probable—had to take place "off." Some people said that this was because the Greek actors wore masks and buskins and that it was rather difficult to perform a convincing murder on the stage when both murderer and victim were encumbered with these stage properties. I did not believe this, however. My theory was that the Greeks, being the most artistic nation in the world, instinctively hampered their actors with masks and buskins in order to save their stage at all costs from a descent into what is called realism—the enemy of reality. From the beginning of literature and, indeed—of all the arts, one of the first instincts of men of genius has been to keep clear of realism. That is why Shakespeare and his contemporaries wrote mainly in blank verse instead of in prose. If a realist had written *Hamlet*, he would have made the soldier say not "It is a nipping and an eager air," but "It's bloody cold."

It seemed to me then that literature (including the drama), in order to be a representation of the only parts of life worth representing, had in some respects to be unlike life. There were words proper to use in life, but not proper to use in literature. There were scenes that inevitably happen in life, but that cannot with propriety be put on the stage. Being jealous, I was, of course, thinking particularly of kissing, but I imagined at least a score of other scenes improper for public exhibition. (Improper. How Victorian a word! Yet Aristotle agreed with the Victorians that there was such a thing as impropriety.) It would be improper, I said to myself, to show an operation for appendicitis on the stage. It would be improper to show a scene in a dissecting room with medical students probing with their lancets among the muscles of the withered limbs of the pauper dead. I was told when I was a boy, that, if a stranger ventured into a dissecting room, he was in danger of being subjected to a volley of human mincemeat from the medical students, and, though nothing of this kind happened to me on the only occasion in which I visited a dissecting-room, I have always thought of it as the sort of thing that it would be indecent to exhibit on the stage. Of such scenes, improper for art, any one can easily imagine a hundred. Who would like to see a realistic film of seasickness? Life may be like that, but art is not like that. Art, the truth is, is as false to life—superficially—as life is false to art.

And—said I to myself—it is not only some of the less attractive aspects of life that are unsuited for representation on the stage. There are many quite normal incidents that happen between birth and death that are equally unsuitable. Part of our lives is lived in private and should be kept as free from the dramatist as from the photographer. And it should be kept especially free from the film-producer who so often has combined the vices of the worst kind of dramatist with those of the worst kind of photographer. I have seen many films of which, I am sure, Aristotle would have disapproved, and which would have made him sympathise with the Puritanical American who boasted some years ago that he was the man who had "taken the long-drawn-out kiss out of the movies." He would have defended the American both on moral and on æsthetic grounds, since the Greeks did not understand the modern nonsensical distinction between morals and æsthetics. I, who am no Aristotle and who have scarcely even read him, agree with him. I have seen highly paid human beings on the screen who may not have been able to act but who had an embarrassing gift as they kissed for looking like two codfish in love. Since the invention of the cinema, I have become more than ever convinced that kisses in any kind of acting should be not realistic but symbolic.

I remember many years ago standing at the door of a Galway hotel with the landlord and his wife and a man eminent in his profession who was nevertheless under the influence of liquor. The eminent man said to the landlord: "I have just received a very, very cheering telegram from Dublin, Captain, and I was proposing to celebrate by saluting your good lady with a chaste kiss." "I know, I know," said the Captain, laughing heartily with his pipe in his mouth; "a wee birdie one." And the eminent man gave the landlady a wee birdie one. I have thought ever since—and not merely through jealousy—that the solution of the kissing problem on the stage and on the screen would be simple if the actors confined themselves to a wee birdie one.

I should not have thought of these things if I had not turned on the wireless the other night at a venture, ignorant of the evening's programme, and heard the beautiful voice of Mr. Desmond MacCarthy—what an admirable artist he is as a broadcaster!—asking, "What about kissing?" in a debate about realism with Mr. Frank O'Connor, another broadcaster with the gift. I missed the beginning of the debate, but Mr. MacCarthy's question sent my memory clattering back, like an old Tin Lizzie, to the happy and unhappy days when I sat down to write an article called: "Should Kissing on the Stage Be Stopped?"

Y. Y.

THE CAD

As this story is about a man who is still living, I don't think I will mention his name. Let us call him B.

One fine day B was going along in a tram. By his looks you couldn't tell that he was a cad. He looked like an ordinary modest worker in felt boots. He was going to see a friend of his. A friend who was celebrating his birthday that evening.

As he was going along, he was thinking his thoughts. And most likely, they were rather disgusting thoughts. Most likely he was thinking of the things he was going to eat, free of charge. Or, perhaps, congratulating himself on the fact that he hadn't bought a present for his friend. "People," he thought, "have a silly habit of making presents on a fellow's birthday, but I shall get away without."

And so he was going to a birthday party without a present. He got off at the corner of a certain street. In fact, he got off rather hurriedly, without waiting for the tram to stop. He was in a hurry to get to his friend's before all the food had been eaten up. "The guests," he said to himself, "will fall upon the eatables and finish them off, the devils, before I get there."

But as he jumped off the tram, he heard a whistle and footsteps coming up fast. It was a militiaman hurrying up to him to find out whether he'd hurt himself when he leapt off the tram. Whether his inside was all right, and whether, among other things, he had any money to spare, as he had to pay a fine for jumping off a moving vehicle.

"Well," thought our hero, "I'm now in for a three-roubles fine. Perhaps it would have been better if I'd bought a couple of rotten apples for my friend rather than waste money on fines."

With this thought he quickly joined the crowd and walked off as if the whole affair had nothing to do with him. As if it were someone else and not him at all who had jumped off the tram.

But the militiaman followed him and said:

"It isn't very nice of you, Comrade, to run away like that."

"What's the matter?" said B. "It wasn't me who jumped off. What should I pay your fine for? Have you gone off your chump standing on point-duty? I'm walking quietly on my own. As for the tram, I haven't been in one for three days."

"Is that your game?" the militiaman said. "Well, then, come along to the police station with me."

"All right," said B.

And seeing that there were no witnesses about, he began to swear at him in a most horrible way, so that the militiaman himself, even, gaped at him in surprise. B kept it up all the way, but the militiaman had a lot of self-control and preserved his dignity.

At last they arrived at the police station. The militiaman reported to his chief what had happened. "Besides," he added, "he's been insulting me without cause. He's been swearing at me all the way. Write that down, please."

Our cad then says:

"He's an impudent liar. I never insulted him. Besides, there were no witnesses, and I positively deny this accusation."

To this the chief replied:

"We are accustomed to believe our men. And we shall make a report about you at once."

They wrote down every detail and asked B his name, his address and the place where he worked. And B, from sheer funk, and also because of his caddishness, gave them a wrong address.

As he did that, he asked to be released at once, because he said

he was going to be late for a party. But the chief told him to wait a little. He rang up the address office and asked them to look up B's address.

Then B, seeing that his deceit was going to be discovered, began to apologise.

"I beg your pardon," he says, "I gave you a wrong address, and a wrong name. I don't know what's come over me. A sort of temporary confusion of thought."

"Ah, that's the sort of fellow you are," said the chief. "Now we understand your character. Out with it, then! Give us your correct address and clear out!"

A vision of a trial and other unpleasant things flashed through B's mind. But still he could not bring himself to give them his own address. He gave them the address of his friend, who was having the birthday party, and his name, too.

"Nothing will happen to him," he thought. "He will prove his innocence, and if they try to check the address now they'll find it correct."

The chief of the police station, in fact, rang up the address office and got confirmation from them. They told him that a person of that name lived at that address, and that they could let B go.

And so, very much relieved, B hurried off to his friend's birthday party. But, as you would expect, he got there rather late. All the food was eaten up, and all he got was a glass of cold tea and a biscuit or something with it.

Rather upset by this, B thought to himself: "Never mind, I've got a nice surprise for him. He'll soon get it in the neck, the swine."

And in a good mood again, he went back home.

A day or two later, B's friend comes to his office and, very excited, tells his friends:

"An incredible thing has happened to me. If I didn't know it was true, I would have thought I'd dreamt it. Some cads imposed a fine on me—twenty-five roubles, for insulting a militiaman and for telling lies. And I simply cannot understand why. But they tell me: If you don't pay we'll give orders to have it taken off your salary."

When B heard it, he was a little embarrassed and said:

"Listen, Vania, I've never given you anything for your birthday. What if I give you ten roubles now, so that you can pay your fine and not worry any more?"

Then it dawned upon the friend that there was something fishy about that.

"Excuse me," he said to B. "I know your stinginess very well. And it is very surprising to me that you're offering me ten roubles. Are you the dog who played this filthy trick on me? I recollect now that you were late to my party and were rather upset when you arrived. So that's the sort of present you give to your friends!"

And with these words he took good aim and struck him on the face.

B then looked rather surprised, and said to his friend:

"All right then, I'll pay the whole fine, only don't give me away. Don't ruin my reputation. Here's twenty-five roubles. Hurry up, and pay it."

"I like this very much," said the friend. "You're the cad, and you've done the thing. And now you expect me to go and pay for you."

"All right," said B, "I'll go and pay myself. Only don't shout so much."

And he ran to the police station.

There, unfortunately, the man on duty was the same man who had difficulties with B's friend. Our hero, without thinking, handed him the letter from the police, demanding payment, and also the money.

The man on duty, amazed at the change in the appearance of the accused, said he couldn't make it out.

"The devil take you," he said. "First one man refuses to pay, and now a different man wants to."

Just then the chief of the police station came in. He recognised the cad at once, and said:

"Ah! I understand everything now. Now you won't get away with it."

B begged to be forgiven, and humiliated himself in every way. But they wrote the whole affair down. And they sent the report to his place of work.

There, a trial by the comrades of the staff took place, and our cad, to the general surprise, was fined ten roubles. He was also sentenced to a public reprimand, and was given a severe warning for the future.

MICHAEL ZOSHCHENKO
(Translated by ELISAVETA FEN)

THE GOATS

WE are the goats:
horned, cloven-hooved, like Satan in disguise,
symbols of prodigality and lies,
we are the motes
in other people's eyes.

Forgive, forgive,
our gawky bones, our butting ignorance;
we have a whiteness in us shall outlive
this Devil's Dance.

Oh where is the white goat, the Nanny;
she who on thin toes trod the mountain tops?
Low down on village greens, a bleating granny,
she crops and crops.

M. R. DUNNETT

THE MOVIES

"The Long Voyage Home," at the Gaumont
"Seven Sinners," at the Odeon

The only good films in the end are director's films—films, that is, in which the director overtops his stars. And better perhaps a poor "director's film" than a good anonymous one. At any rate, one goes to see *The Long Voyage Home* because it is John Ford's, and one enjoys, and one is disappointed by, John Ford. The faults are fairly obvious. He makes no fresh discovery of the human struggle as he did in *Grapes of Wrath;* his sailors are sailors in a story, and that story is not particularly well managed. The voyage of a tramp carrying munitions across the Atlantic to England, the life of the fo'c'sle, the crashing seas and an attack by Nazi planes give breadth and excitement; but this larger drama is accompanied by individual dramas which run free of the theme. An Englishman, Smitty, who sits apart and fights a longing for whisky, is suspected as a spy and later machine-gunned by the Nazis; the darling of the crew is Olsen, a young giant, because he alone has a home to go to in Sweden and this is his last voyage; most of the others are American-Irish, rough, wistful, weather-beaten and war-shy. Realism, as we might expect, is the ruling quality, but it is a different realism from the documentary scope of *Grapes of Wrath*. Magnificent though the picturing of the voyage is—the swaying horizon, dark seas and clouds, the creak of timber—it is a scene familiarly stressed. The photography, mostly in a dark key, compels the eye throughout, yet splendid as it is, we feel at times the straining after lustrous or murky effects. This is true particularly of the Limehouse in which the sailors finally shore: the "realism" of a black-out dramatically lit, of softly-padding pimp and brothel bar-room, is strikingly romantic. Or rather it is a literary realism carried over from books and the stage. (*The Informer*, an earlier film, was taken from Liam O'Flaherty, and *The Long Voyage Home* has its source in a group of plays by O'Neill.) Perhaps the weakness of the film is that it lacks a theme and aims rather at an atmosphere, which clings naturally to the voyage and the boat, but has to be squeezed (this was my feeling) out of the characters when they are brought close to us. Vividly exciting, brilliantly individual, positive, unsatisfactory, even disappointing: these were the adjectives that crowded on me as I came away from the Gaumont cinema. Yet if I had to choose any film of recent weeks to see again, this is the one I should pick.

In *Seven Sinners* La Dietrich sails back into her own. Not for years has she seemed so light, so alluring. I enjoy her conception of the *femme fatale* when it is in distant enough surroundings. Here she fascinates the whole of the East Indies. Singing huskily in a wonderful sailor suit, posing in black behind mosquito nets, set against sunlight lattices, carried in rickshaws and up gangways—no wonder there is a riot wherever she goes, and the authorities ban her from one island after another. The film begins with legends of riots, and ends in a rough-house which is a *reductio ad absurdum* of all rough-houses; the uppercuts clop like the guillotine, bodies fairly dive through the air. This takes place at the café of the Seven Sinners, where in quieter times the American Navy, led by a handsome lieutenant (John Wayne), comes to play snooker and a wealthy customer (Oscar Homolka) throws knives at the barman between drinks. The two meet in the general battle, but La Dietrich leaves the winner to complete the conquest of other islands. The presence here of the American Navy in the Far East has, by the way, no topical significance.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Beggar's Opera," at the New

Mr. Herbert Marshall's production of *The Beggar's Opera* for the Sadler's Wells is modest and agreeable. Without the romantic picturesque of the recent Gielgud revival, it keeps close to the period and adapts itself ingeniously to the more modest resources at its disposal. The Sadler's Wells company rise remarkably well to a rather different occasion. Who would have suspected that Miss Joan Cross would bring off with such triumphant success the slattern's tipsy stagger of Mrs. Peachum? And Edith Coates's broad Lucy was another excellent performance. Indeed, with the gentlemen, in spite of their ferocious appearances, somewhat inclined to gentility, it was left to the ladies to supply the right raffish note, and a special word of commendation belongs to the chorus, who proved themselves excellent sluts. Mr. John Hargreaves relied on his voice to create character and it is a pleasant experience to hear Macheath so lyrically sung. The only fault we can find with a direct, quick-moving performance is the modernised prologue; a good idea, but it fails to come off.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, March 1st—
Dr. Dudley Stamp: "Misuse of Land," Flemings Restaurant, 68 Oxford Street, 2.
Public Meeting on India. Speakers include: Krishna Menon and Olaf Stapledon. Co-operative Hall, Manchester, 3.

SUNDAY, March 2nd—
Prof. G. W. Keeton: "What Do We Mean By Social Justice?" Conway Hall, 11.
K. B. Smellie: "Social Philosophy: Modern to Kant," 17 Manchester Street, 11.
Stephen Spender, "War and English Literature." 36 Upper Park Road, N.W. 3. 3.

MONDAY, March 3rd—
Fabian International Affairs Group Snack Lunch. Hans Gottfurcht: "How to Appeal to the German Workers," 12 Great Newport Street, 1.

TUESDAY, March 4th—
E. C. Kent: "Neighbourhood Planning," Housing Centre, 1.
H. A. R. Gibb: "Egypt," Royal Institution, 2.30.

WEDNESDAY, March 5th—
Prof. van Praag: "Les Femmes et la Littérature au XVIIIe siècle, Institut Français, 3.

FRIDAY, March 7th—
C. E. M. Joad: "Some Problems of Philosophy," Birkbeck College, 1.15.

SATURDAY, March 8th—
S.C.R. Annual Luncheon. Prof. George Thomson: "Anthropological Theory in the U.S.S.R.," Royal Hotel, 12.30. Tickets 4s. (members 3s. 6d.) from 98 Gower Street, W.C.1.

Correspondence

FUTURE OF ABYSSINIA

SIR,—The writer of the article on "The Future of Abyssinia" in your last issue is evidently well acquainted with the country, but perhaps in certain respects not quite up to date in his information. He has rightly stressed the difficulties which will confront the Emperor in bringing order and good government to his distracted country; but his vivid appreciation of these difficulties has led him to give a somewhat pessimistic impression which seems to me wholly unwarranted.

A few of his statements need some qualification or explanation. For instance, in referring to the slavery question the author fails to give sufficient credit to the Emperor for the progress that had been made in abolishing slavery. The slavery question in 1923, when Abyssinia became a member of the League of Nations, was two-fold: on the one hand, there had existed from time immemorial trade in slaves, natives from the Nile valley being taken right across Abyssinia and Eritrea and being shipped to Arabia; on the other hand, there was domestic slavery, which consisted of a settled population of slaves engaged almost entirely in domestic labour and farm work.

Laws against the slave trade date from the time of the Emperor Menelik I; but they could not be enforced. The actual suppression of the slave trade was begun by the present Emperor as Regent, and the punishments inflicted made him unpopular with many of the feudal chieftains. The slave markets were abolished and the long distance traffic in slaves was complete suppressed.

Domestic slavery is a totally different matter. The slaves live often as members of the family; or a slave has his own hut, his own cow and vegetable garden. Masters guilty of cruelty to slaves were severely punished. In 1924 a law was promulgated to facilitate the liberation of slaves, and this was extended in 1931. A general liberation of slaves would have created an economic crisis. There was not sufficient money in circulation to pay wages to all of them. Many thousands of slaves were liberated by judicial procedure; and the law prescribed that the children of slaves were born free. It was calculated that the measures actually taken would bring slavery to an end before 1950. I may add that domestic slavery existed throughout East Africa. I am told that it exists to the present day in Eritrea and that it has only been slowly dying out under British rule in the Sudan and Kenya.

Many people who do not know Abyssinia confuse its people with the negro tribes of Central Africa. The truth is that the inhabitants of the Abyssinian plateau are a Christian and cultured people with a long history, of which they are quite conscious, and an ancient literature. In thinking of the Abyssinians they should be compared with the Arabs or with the peoples of India.

The country which we may hope the Emperor will be spared to govern will be in many respects different from the Abyssinia of 1935. The Emperor had then begun a programme of road construction extending to 2,000 miles of good motor roads; but the Italians have not only completed and improved the roads they found, but have made a number of splendid main roads. If these are kept in order, as they must be, the power of the central government will be enormously enhanced. There can be no going back to the feudal system. The Emperor knows this; for he had already started to appoint his own men as governors of distant provinces.

The Emperor is anxious to have assistance in developing the country and intends to appoint foreign advisers who may be recommended. There must, of course, be a modern army with at least a small air force; and, if Italy remains in Eritrea, a fortified frontier. Certainly, as your article says, the main responsibility for aiding the Emperor in setting up his government must rest upon us. But is there any necessity to make a "transfer of our powers into the hands of international advisers?" This sounds like an international body of control, which certainly it not a part of the official programme. I cannot see that there is any necessity to make a transfer. The Emperor is likely to have British advisers at the start, and it is to be hoped that they will make themselves useful to him and popular with the people of the country. When the time comes to replace some of them individually, it will be for the Emperor to appoint persons of other nationalities as he sees fit.

Difficulties have in the past arisen over the frontier tribes and these may perhaps be avoided in the future by the appointment of a joint frontier commission which would control a police force operating on both sides of the frontier. The British Government has formally renounced territorial ambitions in Abyssinia and this leaves it open to us to render assistance in every practicable way. H. STANLEY JEVONS

Abyssinia Association,
33 Maunsel Street,
Westminster, S.W.1.

"JOLLIED ALONG"

SIR,—To three groups of people in this empire the words "the enemy" mean three things.

The first, the "Vansittart" group, thinks and writes so loosely that it sees no absurdity in "the German people" as its enemy. Worse, it sees no danger or dishonesty in an equivocal publication like *Black Record* at a time when from Viscount Maugham (*Lies as Allies*, OUP, 1941) through Sir Archibald Southby ("to tell the truth is the most potent weapon you can possibly possess," Hansard, Feb. 6th, 1941, to John "truth and love" Strachey, the worth of truth and studied accuracy as weapons is becoming apprehended.

To the second group the enemy is "one man." This is a dangerous thesis and Mr. Noel Baker explained why. (Many intelligent Italians think "we are planning to make peace with some Fascist leader other than Mussolini," Hansard, *ibid.* Even Mr. Churchill's "one man" speech alarmed pro-British opinion in the U.S.A., where it was described as "still-born," "a major miss" (*New Republic*).

To the third group of course the enemy is Fascism, whether it emerges from Milan or Tooting.

The most important single step the Government could take to-day would be to announce at last and at least that Fascism is the enemy; that Britain's war and peace aims are its abolition; and her weapons truth and guns. J. H. BENNITT

230 St. Bernard's Road,
Birmingham, 27.

SIR,—Why all this vague talk about stating our Peace Aims when it is apparent why the Government tactfully omits to declare them?

If it is desirable that we should retain our National Unity is it not obvious that we cannot state our Peace Aims? Surely it is better to let the workers think they are going to get a square deal after the war and also to let the capitalists presume that they will regain their pre-war privileges, than to disillusion one of them. If the Government told the people now that after the war there will be a social revolution, the capitalists would simply withdraw their support, and if the Government told the people that we were fighting to retain the old standards of British Imperialism, the people would revolt.

Obviously, one section of the people is living in a fool's paradise, but for the conduct of the war is it not better that this should be so?

25 Bushey Hall Road, J. T. ATKINSON
Totley, Nr. Sheffield.

SIR,—Commander Southby's broadcast was obviously pretty easy game to tackle, especially in a journal and for a body of readers such as yours. But I have a feeling that in your article under the above heading it was made just a little too easy. You say that "France was defeated by Hitler's publication of war aims," and that "for months the French listened to Göbbels explaining that Hitler had no ill-will towards France, that the British were letting them down . . ." and so on.

Surely it is highly questionable whether the rank and file millions of Frenchmen were so gullible as to fall for Hitler's promises of a better world; what is probably true enough is that he defeated France, or at all events contributed to her defeat, by corrupting not the rank and file millions but the comparatively few among the leaders who were open to corruption. The kind of war aims and promises of a better world that we want to publish are such as will appeal, not to a few corrupt leaders in the countries of the world, but precisely to the rank and file millions.

I suggest therefore that there is a fundamental fallacy in holding up Hitler and his technique as an example of what we are leaving undone.

7 Sion Hill, GEORGE A. FALK
Clifton, Bristol.

THE PEOPLE'S ARMY

SIR,—As one who has been conscripted to fight for Christian principles against barbarism or truth and beauty and love against ugliness—call it what you will—I am very interested in the perpetual emphasis in your correspondence on the necessity of a new society based on those principles and perpetually perplexed by the question who is to create this new world apart from John Strachey, Critic, Mr. Wellock and some others. These gentlemen are all agreed that there must be no return to the old order of pre-war years, which even they admit was a class society, but what they appear to forget is that the war has so far in no sense weakened its grip on the people.

A year in the army reveals how impossible it is for such an organisation to fight for progress and a new society, because the army betrays most openly those contradictions in society which existed before the war and still persist.

Perhaps if I give a personal example, it will show more clearly what I mean, and first I should explain that I have been since 1935 actively interested in politics and during that time a member of the Labour League of Youth and then Secretary of a Divisional Labour Party. Shortly after I entered the

army—in an infantry regiment of some considerable renown—I applied and was recommended by my Company Commander for a Commission. In due course I was summoned by the Commanding Officer and after being informed that he knew "all about me," I was told that if I wished to secure promotion in the army, I must forget my belief in Socialism. The C.O. went on to say that at some time or other my belief in Socialism might conflict with my duty in this war, which was to kill Germans, and therefore must renounce my faith. This actually happened after the entry of the Labour Party leaders into the Government.

In the battalion to which I belong there are 750 private soldiers who are absolutely cut off from the commissioned ranks and every effort is being made even to segregate them from the N.C.O.s. Recently lance-corporals have been forbidden to walk out with private soldiers, sergeants to associate with corporals. Entry into the commissioned ranks is restricted to those with a higher education. Even those who penetrate into the commissioned ranks are less likely to get promotion if they hold Socialist views and believe in a society based on "truth and love."

I admit the necessity of a new society, indeed I passionately desire it, but I and thousands of others who are in the armed forces ask how can this be achieved when the whole organisation not only of the fighting Services but of the State is in the hands of men who are rigidly opposed to those new ideas and wish to preserve the old society.

CONSCRIPT

THE FAILURE OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

SIR,—No one will dispute the historic, though temporary, failure of Continental Socialism after the last war—least of all a Continental Socialist. But of the examples which your correspondent, Herr Bruno Heilig, selects to substantiate this charge one at least is certainly ill-chosen. He indicts precisely that Socialist Party in Europe (a) which has carried out the one and only serious attempt at Democratic Socialist construction on the Continent and (b) which was the first (and, with the exception of the Spaniards, the only) Socialist movement to take up arms against Fascism: the Austrian Socialists. Herr Heilig's reading of Austrian history is highly misleading. The Austrian Socialists never "deserted" or handed over a power they could have held democratically. When, after having rescued the country from ruins, they lost at the polls, in 1920—precisely because people like Herr Heilig at that time found them too rash in pursuing their Socialist aims—they simply did what the British Labour Party or any other democratic party would have done in their place: they let the Conservative majority form a government and went into opposition. On the other hand, they democratically maintained power in Vienna—and used it. "Red Vienna" was far more than model houses for workers and municipal taxes reformed. It was a Socialist two-thirds majority bent on a tremendous constructive effort, but hampered by capitalist surroundings and post-war exhaustion. It was a revolutionary yet truly democratic workers' movement, which had a wonderful, wide-flung educational system as well as arms; and which created a new culture in an old and cultured city. It was indeed a great attempt; and that is why Fascism was so eager to destroy it.

But where was Herr Heilig while both this construction and this destruction were performed? Let me quote his own words: He lived "as an editor and foreign correspondent of democratic newspapers which were closely associated with the Labour Movement in Berlin from 1928 to 1933 and in Vienna from 1933 until the Nazis came . . ." Now, on March 7th, 1933, two days after Hitler's Reichstag-fire election in Germany, Dollfuss in Austria made his coup d'état, abolished the freedom of the press and soon after did away with Parliament. That is to say that Herr Heilig has never known Austrian Socialism while it was at work in a free country; he has merely been a witness to its last and desperate fight. Further, the "democratic" newspaper in Austria on which he worked until 1938 was democratic no more—certainly not after February 1934, when the whole of the Austrian press was "gleichgeschaltet" controlled and partly subsidised by the Austro-Fascist Government. Should not, therefore, the criticism of Herr Heilig have been directed rather at those intellectuals who had an opportunity, then, to fight for Democracy, let alone Socialism, and lacked the courage to do it; who staffed a gagged and servile press while their Socialist colleagues were thrown into gaol; and who remembered their Democratic and Socialist convictions only when Hitler had driven them into exile on racial grounds? Should he not have reflected how ill such criticism comes from people who merely looked on while the Austrian workers died in a real battle for freedom, who carried on in their offices under a Fascist regime—and who now come out to accuse the Socialists of not having fought enough for Socialism?

OSCAR PAUL,
Former Editor of the Socialist *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Vienna.

London, N.W.3.

"THE BILIOUS WEEKLY"

SIR,—Let me comfort you. When I write about *The Bilious Weekly* (an increasingly popular title) the *Spectator* is not the paper I have in mind. Nor did you suppose for a moment that it was, possessing as you do direct evidence to the contrary. You do not print my letter but twist and misrepresent it in a "comment." A small but, I say with regret, characteristic piece of dishonesty.

A. P. HERBERT

P.S.—Thank you for reprinting the very sensible remarks I made some time ago about America's contribution to the last *Peace*. I received at the time many congratulations on them from the United States.

House of Commons.

[Without provocation Mr. Herbert indulged in a series of malicious attacks on us. Cannot he take it when we retort with a mild leg-pull?—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

FUTURE OF THE LABOUR PARTY

SIR,—Mr. Allighan is persistent and perverse in his prevarication. Of course I do not deny what is printed on page 58 of the Annual Report. The trouble is that Mr. Allighan will not quote accurately what is clearly stated there.

He again describes as "a shrewd device" "the act of adding the monies received from Local Parties *during the first three months of* 1940 to those received during the twelve months 1939, and calling them 'Receipts for the year ending December 31st, 1939'." Mr. Allighan errs in the use of the words "during the first three months of 1940." The item he questions, as I previously stated, was received "during 1939 as fees in advance for 1940." The statement is plain and is accepted without question by many more accomplished financial experts that Mr. Allighan appears to be.

It may be noted that Constituency Party fees due for 1939, totalling £1,600, received during the early months of 1940, are not included in the Statement of Accounts for 1939, but are reported on page 46. Some Parties pay late, others remit early—that renders it difficult and unwise to argue simply from the Receipts and Payments Account.

The reduction in Constituency Party membership (under 20,000) was frankly stated and explained. Considering the difficulties many Parties experienced from September to December, 1939, it was not unexpected.

J. S. MIDDLETON,
Secretary.

The Labour Party,
Smith Square, S.W.1.

THE "PINK" DECADE

SIR,—Harry Pollitt in his autobiography says that his mother warned him when speaking to a working-class audience always to use the simplest words and the most direct form of expression. Having read Mr. Spender's Open Letter about the Pink Decade, I wonder whether Mrs. Pollitt was right to limit her remark to the working class. Because the bits of my article which fell into Mr. Spender's hands had originally a shape and significance different from those he gave them.

Let me take his three main points; 1, that to join with the working class meant getting a job in a factory, living in a slum and trying to write from that centre of being, which required "the faith in life, at every level of existence, of a saint." For the last six months I have been living under Army conditions, with a standard of life rather below that of a slum dweller, in the company of many men who have lived all their lives in slums. That existence is forced on me, because I was too much of a coward voluntarily to make that identification seven years ago, when it might have been possible to avoid this war. I see us now being forced to do for a cause in which we have little positive belief what we would better have done for a cause in which we could believe. I am far from being a saint, but my faith in life at its most depressed levels is what keeps me at this time from despair. If I had taken this course of action, I would not have done so in order to suffer with the suffering but to fight with the struggling. It would have meant the dislocation of my entire life at that time. Instead, I waited for the present conflict to dislocate my life and stop my creative writing. It would also have meant that if I wanted to write of the industrial struggle, I could have done so with the passion and authority of experience.

Mr. Spender's second point was that the working class have not the time, leisure or education to read; and that the pathetic life of *Left Review* was a sign of the earnest intention of Left Wing writers to write, if necessary, for nothing. I regard *Left Review* as the proof of the inability of its contributors to write with the simplicity, experience and understanding necessary for a working-class public. It was by intellectuals for intellectuals. The success of the Penguin Books seems to me to prove that good books, even when written for "an educated leisured class of readers," can evoke a mass response when published cheaply.

Mr. Spender's third point is the blunt accusation of my insincerity. I said that if a writer had intended to write of the growth of Fascism and the struggle to avert it, a better training than schoolmastering was to have acted as a foreign correspondent in half a dozen capitals in Europe and America. "Unfortunately there was no newspaper magnate so beneficent as to give them jobs of this sort." His comment is "And why should you expect a newspaper magnate to be such a mug?" Why indeed? Not because these cartographers of the social geography were dangerous revolutionaries, but because they were very bad journalists, incompetent reporters. A dozen foreign correspondents, like Gunther or Gedye, were more fitted to explain the complex development of Fascism and Nazism, because they knew it not only theoretically but in terms of men, characters and faces.

I am not attributing blame to any one person. I wrote deliberately in the first person plural; and when I referred to "technical virtuosity" it was not in envy of Auden's, but in condemnation of my own, such as it is or was. I did not write, as I might well have done, recapturing the puzzled conflicting moods with which in 1935 we approached the future, but as one, like posterity, wise after the event. In the 'thirties we were faced with the choice, like de Montherlant, of saying, "At this moment I am free. Let me write whatever I like, regardless of the future," or alternatively, "I see that very soon I shall not be free to write as I like, unless I fight now with every weapon in my power to avert the calamity." We did neither, trying to do both. I can think of nothing which better describes our attitude than two lines written by Mr. Spender himself at the very beginning of the decade,

> Who live under the shadow of a war
> what can I do that matters?

ARTHUR CALDER MARSHALL

COULEUR D'ORANGE

SIR,—A few weeks ago I gave a lighthearted little talk for the B.B.C. about food suggestions from Holland. Among other things I said that instead of throwing away orange peel, one might grate this and mix with mashed potatoes.

The Ministry of Food published this suggestion, together with more useful and substantial recipes, in one of their admirable Food Facts (No. 28).

Your Critic pounced *heavily* upon my innocent "couleur d'orange" and says that this will not in itself solve the most serious food problem. Really? We all thought that it would. And if he must call it "blah de jour" please ask him to spell it correctly —"blah *du* jour."

What I would really like to know is—if the cuisine of your paper could run to a little more soufflé in their cooking.

I believe it was Taine who said about somebody's writing, "qu'il prend tout au tragique et rien au sérieux." Your "spécialité de la maison" is to do both.

H. SCHRYVER

50 South Audley Street,
Grosvenor Square, W.1.

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MR. GEORGE ORWELL has many of the traits of the best English pamphleteers: courage, an individual mind, vehement opinions, an instinct for stirring up trouble, the arts of appealing to that imaginary creature the sensible man and of combining original observation with sweeping generalisation, of seeing enemies everywhere and despising all of them. And like the two outstanding figures of our tradition of pamphleteering, Cobbett and Defoe, both of whom had his subversive, non-conforming brand of patriotism, he writes a lucid conversational style which wakes one up suddenly like cold water dashed in the face. The sting of it is sometimes refreshing; sometimes it makes one very angry. For Mr. Orwell likes his friends no better than his enemies and in the name of commonsense is capable of exaggerating with the simplicity and innocence of a savage. His virtue is that he says things which need to be said; his vice that some of those things needed saying with a great deal more consideration. But, damn thoughtfulness! Pamphleteers have to hit the bull's-eye every time, or, failing that, somebody else's eye. Mr. Orwell's standards of accuracy and judiciousness are in the tradition and may be compared with those of Shaw, the greatest pamphleteer of our time. I will give one key example from *The Lion and the Unicorn** and be done with it:

> It is a strange fact, but it is unquestionably true, that almost any English intellectual would feel more ashamed of standing to attention during "God Save the King," than of stealing from a poor box.

"Unquestionably" is the word I like in that sentence which might have come from the *Daily Express*, the rumbustious Catholic converts and all those patriotic English Conservative members of Parliament who cheered when English ships were bombed during the Spanish war.

In general Mr. Orwell's book may be described as the argument for the urgency of *British* Socialism. This argument seems to me unanswerable. For it springs from the neglected truths of what may be called the geographical interpretation of history which is everywhere receiving justification to-day but which for years has been unwarrantably smiled away as a romantic or reactionary error. Mr. Orwell believes that there are fundamental differences between nations, that class character exists but that it has not superseded national character. He notes that there is some force in English life, deriving no doubt from the fact that we live on an island, which drives us always to national unity; ideas, theories, are annulled by it, sometimes wisely, sometimes unwisely. All foreign writers have noted it. And our culture, whatever it may owe to Western Europe, has not the complete Western European stamp upon it; it is as individual, he correctly says, as the culture of Spain, itself virtually an island off the coast of Western Europe. These are truisms which international Socialism has nevertheless more excuse for forgetting than Mr. Orwell, in his sweeping attack on the Left Wing intellectuals, would grant; but the Socialist movement all over Europe, and despite two major wars, *has* been fatally weak in psychological sensibility. Preparing the outline of the new world, Socialists have forgotten to their cost the people who are going to inhabit it. And nations are like people; changes like industrial capitalism may modify them, but do not appear seriously to shake more deeply set fixations in the life of a nation. In Spain, for example, even in the most urbanised and industrialised parts, it is clear that the grip of tribal or pastoral civilisation is still decisive after centuries of feudalism, capitalism and imperialism.

What is the application of Mr. Orwell's opening argument? That we should wave flags and clank our tankards over what is left of the roast beef of old England with Lord Elton or Mr. Arthur Bryant? It is not, of course. The one English trait lacking from Mr. Orwell's own very English character is the taste for sentimental uplift; his sentiment is for the low-down, a sort of idealism turned inside-out. With many jeers Mr. Orwell explains that the intellectuals—that race which, with the Jews, has become the pariah race of Europe—must stop sneering at British things and the Empire, must toughen themselves and work practically for a native Socialism which will be as attractive to refined palates as stringy chops, Worcester sauce and suet pudding. We owe most of the attacks on English things, not to the working class or the muddled up classes of the middle, but to Public School boys and the privileged. The fact is that work gives one a stronger stake in the country than does inherited wealth. Shut out of the Empire by its stagnation the privileged have rounded on it. This is a superficial debating view of the case as so much of Mr. Orwell's destructive side is, but there is a germ of truth in it. Yet the intellectuals have a strong case too. In the first place, intellect and art being generally suspect in England, it was natural for them to seek foreign friends, to make contact with Western European culture. Secondly, internationalism was by no means a dream in the twenties. It had real foundations; nor was pacifism entirely the sentimental daydream of a people lulled by the possession of a strong navy. Both in its religious and in its socially active forms—see Gregg—it had for the realistically minded the impulse of a revolutionary force. It is far from certain that the things in which the intellectuals believed in the twenties and thirties will turn out to have been only an elegant or even snobbish cosmopolitanism, unless of course one is judging the race by those frail, over-cultivated creepers which hang their ogling blossoms in the hot houses of every civilisation. I gather that in his less raw-edged moments Mr. Orwell sees that this hated race which used its brains and displayed its sensibility was not plum decadent—as stated by the Marxist gramophone record—but for many reasons lacked power in their own country. At their worst they were the Rudins of England, isolated by the despotism of the aged. Among other reasons for this despotism was not only the bad distribution of the national wealth but the slaughter of the last war. The law of diminishing returns was depressingly at work throughout the twenties and thirties. Mr. Orwell puts it more picturesquely:

> (England) resembles a rather stuffy Victorian family, with not many black sheep in it, but with all the cupboards bursting with skeletons. It has rich relations who have to be kow-towed to and poor relations who are horribly sat upon, and there is a deep conspiracy of silence about the source of the family income. It is a family in which the young are generally thwarted and most of the power is in the hands of irresponsible uncles and bedridden aunts.

But that is a picture of England before Dunkirk.

> War is the greatest of all agents of change. It speeds up processes, wipes out minor distinctions, brings realities to the surface. . . . Patriotism, against which the Socialists have fought so long, has become a tremendous lever in their hands.

The English revolution had tentatively begun. The rest of Mr. Orwell's book is devoted to attacking the remaining obstructions in its way—chiefly the provincialism of the Labour Party and the theories of those who are still living in the dream of a rising of the proletariat.

With a writer who is slashing about all over the field at once it is hard to argue; the position is always changing. One must leave the reader to scatter question marks in the margin of this book.

I myself would question whether it is up to date to speak generally of "wooden-headed officials" in the Empire. No doubt there are plenty but the future problem of the Empire, according to many good authorities, seems to lie in the fact that the officials are not wooden-headed, but are indeed too enlightened. Far more enlightened than the mass of the white exploiting population. The clash is notorious in Africa. It may be that this enlightenment, like that of older Bloomsbury, is out of touch with economic realities. Perhaps in Mr. Orwell's tough world of the future such an official cuts as useless a figure as the fanciful Edwardian curate. Like marriage for the virgin of the Victorian novel, revolutionary socialism means both fulfilment *and* lowering of certain standards.

The kind of way in which Mr. Orwell is right, in my opinion, can be illustrated by passages like the following:

> The tendency of advanced capitalism has therefore been to enlarge the middle class and not to wipe it out as it once seemed likely to do. But much more important than this is the spread of middle class ideas and habits among the working class.

(What about the war? Doesn't the war put an end to those economic and technical advantages which make the middle-class spread possible?)

> The place to look for the germs of the future England is in the light industry areas and along the arterial roads. In Slough, Dagenham, Barnet, Letchworth, Hayes—and indeed on the outskirts of great towns—the old pattern is gradually changing into something new. In those vast new wildernesses of glass and brick the sharp distinctions of the older kind of town, with its slums and mansions, or of the country with its manor houses and squalid cottages, no longer exist. There are wide gradations of income, but it is the same kind of life that is being lived at different levels in labour-saving flats or Council houses, along the concrete roads and in the naked democracy of the swimming pools. It is rather a restless, cultureless life, centering round tinned food, *Picture Post*, the radio and the internal combustion engine. It is a civilisation in which children grow up with an intimate knowledge of magnetos and in complete ignorance of the Bible. To that civilisation belong the people who are most at home and most definitely of the modern world, the technicians and the higher paid skilled workers, the airmen and their mechanics, the radio experts, film producers, popular journalists and industrial chemists. They are the indeterminate stratum at which the older class distinctions are beginning to break down.

None of the nineteenth century class theories apply to these people; they are not the *petit bourgeois*, the Kipps, Pollys and Notting Hill Napoleons of the small shops. They are as new to their age as that terrible man Robinson Crusoe was to his.

V. S. PRITCHETT

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for example, a marked difference of method. The traditional philosophical method is to take a set of premises assumed to be self-evident and to deduce from them by a process of reasoning, conclusions which, given that the premises were true and the reasoning valid, were themselves true. Yes, but true of what? Of the universe—or so at least it has always been supposed. In other words, the conclusions of valid reasoning based upon true premises give us information as to the nature of what is. But—and it is at this point that the modern logical positivist takes the field—suppose that the truth is not, after all, cosmic but linguistic; suppose, in other words, that the conclusions of our reasoning, instead of telling us something about the universe, tell us only something about the meaning of words, or, more precisely, about the way in which the conventions of grammar and syntax require that words should be used. Because of these conventions we could not, says the positivist, have failed, assuming that we observed them, to reach the conclusions we did, but the conclusions have only a verbal significance. This view has become fashionable among many modern philosophers, and it is obvious that, if it is true, it cuts the mind off from all knowledge of the universe.

So far, we have been considering only those conclusions which are reached by process of reasoning. What of those which purport to report experience as, for example, the conclusion expressed in the proposition that I am now sitting at a desk and holding a pen? Surely, it may be said, these at least are true; true, that is to say, in the sense of corresponding with observed fact; true, therefore, in a non-linguistic sense. But even this is denied. Here is Russell's statement of the positivists' denial:

> A proposition is "true" within a given system, if it is consistent with the rest of the system, but there may be other systems, inconsistent with the first, in which the proposition in question will be "false." There is no such process . . . as deriving the truth of a proposition from some non-verbal occurrence: the world of words is a closed, self-contained world, and the philosopher need not concern himself with anything outside it.

Truth, then, for these philosophers—and Russell is here specifically concerned with the views of Neurath and Hempel, which have aroused widespread interest in this country—is a syntactical concept like the truths of mathematics and logic. A scientific or observational statement is true not because it applies to reality, but because it coheres with or fits into the structure of scientific truth as a whole. And science as a whole is true not because it describes the world, but because the various propositions which compose it are logically and syntactically self-consistent. Statements about the world, then, cannot be made; we can only talk about words. But then, if we cannot know the world, there is no reason why they should be made, since, as Russell points out, the implication of this philosophy is "that there is no definite world with definite properties." (One must, I think, say implication and not statement, since if one cannot make statements about the world, one cannot make statements to the effect that there is no world to make statements about.)

This is the position which Russell devotes a considerable part of his book to attacking. Previous philosophers have advanced the view known as Solipsism, that the mind is entirely enclosed within the circle of its own ideas of which alone it can have knowledge, but, as Russell remarks, it has been left to twentieth-century philosophers to announce that it is entirely enclosed within the circle of grammar rules. The walls of the universe do not a prison make, but words apparently do for the twentieth-century positivist, who has seen fit to shut himself into a cage whose bars consist of the rules of syntax.

The movement of logical positivism has been inspired by the desire to have done with metaphysical moonshine and to stick only to statements which can be verified; but it has developed into the quaintest of mysticisms, a mysticism to which Russell gives the name of neo-neo-Platonic. "I seem to hear them saying," he writes, "'in the beginning was the Word,' not 'in the beginning was what the word means.' It is remarkable that this reversion to ancient metaphysics should have occurred in the attempt to be ultra-empirical."

The gibe is pertinent, but it is misleading, if taken to suggest that Russell is wholly out of sympathy with the movement of whom Neurath, Hempel and Carnap are the best-known representatives. Indeed, he is in some sense its progenitor, since he was one of the first to break away from the nineteenth-century philosophical habit of high *a priori* speculation in the grand metaphysical manner. Russell's breakaway consisted in part in the adoption of a new method in philosophy (a method which the positivists have carried to extremes) of which the present book is a good example.

As opposed to the grand metaphysical method it has two characteristics. First, it is content to take its problems one by one. It is not thought to be necessary, that is to say, to have a general metaphysical theory of the universe before tackling a particular problem of philosophy. Taking one's problems piecemeal, one is content to offer tentative solutions as one goes along. Secondly, it emulates the method of science in bringing to the examination of its problems patience, care and exactitude instead of the somewhat heroic methods of *a priori* speculation, which enabled a man to pronounce himself a materialist or an idealist as a result of discussion and argument turning entirely upon general considerations of an abstract character. To those who are accustomed to philosophical works written in the traditional manner, Russell's method is apt to be puzzling. They will find this book difficult to grasp as a whole, the general plan unsystematic, and the discussions fragmentary and episodic. Why, they will want to know, is just this particular problem introduced at just this particular point? Let me try, then, very briefly to indicate the course that the book follows.

Russell is occupied with two main questions. First, "What is meant by 'empirical evidence for the truth of a proposition'?" Secondly, what can be inferred about the nature of the world from the fact that there sometimes is such evidence. With a view to answering these questions, Russell begins with a discussion of words, sentences, and "the relation of an experience to a sentence which (partially) describes it." He proceeds to problems presented by the analysis of language, dealing in particular with the function of proper names and with what he calls "egocentric particulars," that is to say, with words like "I" and "now," whose meaning is necessarily relative to the speaker. He then considers the nature of perceptual knowledge, and devotes particular attention to the status and informatory properties of a basic proposition which he partially defines as "a proposition which arises on occasion of a perception which is the evidence for its truth." There follows a theory of truth and error, and the enquiry culminates in a discussion of how far logical categories of language correspond to the structure of the non-linguistic world.

This enquiry turns upon the question, how far are we justified in supposing, as all the great philosophers have done, that facts about the world can be inferred from the properties of language? It is here that Russell parts company with the logical positivists, maintaining that some non-linguistic facts can certainly be inferred, even if they are not as numerous as philosophers have traditionally supposed. His main argument against the positivists is that they forget that a word is an empirical phenomenon like any other phenomenon, and that when we know what words occur in a sentence, what we are knowing is a non-verbal fact. If it be admitted that we know at least one non-verbal fact, it seems a little perverse to elaborate ingenious and dubious theories to explain such phenomena as memory knowledge and knowledge of universals, which certainly *appear* to introduce us to non-verbal facts, as being after all merely verbal. Both these kinds of knowledge are dealt with at considerable length, and both as a result of the discussion are admitted.

This is a profound and difficult book, and it would be impertinent to attempt to criticise it after a first cursory reading. I content myself, therefore, with summarising the general conclusion of Russell's enquiry, which is that:

> There is a discoverable relation between the structure of sentences and the structure of the occurrences to which the sentences refer. I do not think the structure of non-verbal facts is wholly unknowable, and I believe that, with sufficient caution, the properties of language may help us to understand the structure of the world.

C. E. M. JOAD.

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The Truth About France. By LOUIS LÉVY. *Penguin.* 6d.

The flow of books on France continues unceasingly. Hardly a week passes without another being added to the list. One is, frankly, getting a little tired of being told for the twentieth time or so "the real truth," or "the whole truth" on "why France fell"; one doesn't want to hear any more about Mme. de Portes and all her *femme fatale* stuff. One would rather know what France is likely to do in future, and whether we can rely on her doing anything to help us to win. Let this preliminary wail at the sight of another bundle of post-mortems not be interpreted as a criticism of either M. Bois or M. Louis Lévy.

But both Bois and Lévy have, each in his own way, done a good job. Elie Bois has been for twenty years or so the Editor of the *Petit Parisien*, and so a person of great importance in the Third Republic. He only had to turn the handle and walk straight into the Prime Minister's study; and it did not matter very much who the Prime Minister was. M. Bois is now in England, and is heart and soul in this war with us and with Mr. Churchill. It would therefore be ungracious to analyse too closely the attitude of his paper in the past, when it was not, perhaps, altogether Churchillian; or to recall a famous article written under M. Bois' name at the time of the Abyssinian conflict. In substance, though not perhaps in tone, it was Lavalian in its dread at the thought of losing for France Mussolini's precious friendship. Perhaps M. Bois is not altogether to blame for the out-and-out Munichism of his paper, for, as he emphasises in this book, he often had to reckon with M. Dupuy, the proprietor. But what he has written here is perfectly Churchillian; and his book is a valuable record—though, at times, over-emotional in style—of the political intrigues that went on in France ever since the beginning of the war. All that went on behind the thrones—and, one might almost say, in the bedrooms—of M. Daladier and M. Reynaud is recorded here with inside knowledge, and on the strength of personal conversations with the big, medium and minor villains, male or female. M. Bois' conversations with Laval at the beginning of the war, and with others who were already then planning a sort of "national revolution" (complete with a patched-up peace), with Pétain as figureheads, are illuminating. As for the two chief personages in his book, M. Bois' apologia for Daladier, and for his "waiting" war policy, is not in the least convincing, while his description of Reynaud, whose weaknesses he magnifies and whose qualities he minimises, seems rather cruel and unfair.

M. Louis Lévy's book is less stuffy. He talks of ordinary soldiers, and not only of Cabinet Ministers and their lady friends. He deals more with political forces than with individuals. His tribute to the French soldiers and officers, whom he knew at first hand as the war correspondent of the *Populaire*, is moving and convincing. The French soldiers were not cowards; where they had a chance to show their valour, as they did, for instance, in the fantastic battle of Rethel, they showed it, and proved themselves worthy of their fathers at Verdun. M. Lévy also protests against the charge made by some foreigners that the officers were rotten with Fascism and defeatism. There was, in the French army, a spirit of comradeship which, in fact, transcended all political views held before the war. Lévy denies all the charges of treason against officers, no matter how Royalist and Fascist they were in their private lives. He admits that the Corap army on the Meuse fled in panic; but he argues that there is no army in which moments of panic are unknown. But the responsibility for the collapse rests not, in Lévy's view, with the individual soldier or officer, but with the High Command, and with the faulty organisation of the whole French war machine.

Another equally important part of Lévy's book is that dealing with the attitude to the war of the French Left. Lévy belonged to the patriotic wing of the Socialist Party—the wing led by Blum and Dormoy; and he found the attitude of the Paul-Fauristes heartbreaking. The Social pacifists were, in effect, the allies of the Bonnets and Chautemps of the Radical Party. Lévy's analysis of the Communists during the war is of great value. He believes that the rank and file were patriotic at heart, despite the Hitler-Stalin pact, and he records that there were no cases of Communist sabotage in the factories except during the Finnish war. Lévy rightly believes that, if the Communist rank-and-file became so disgruntled, it was largely because Daladier had made martyrs of their leaders, and even of their local secretaries.

M. S. SINCLAIR

LITURGICAL HISTORY

Walter Howard Frere. A Collection of his Papers. *Oxford University Press.* 10s. 6d.

The seventh Bishop of Truro came of an East Anglian family which had already given to fame John Hookham Frere, and Sir Bartle Frere, the colonial administrator. The disciple of Charles Gore at Mirfield, he became in time superior of the community; he also became one of the only two Englishmen whose knowledge of liturgical history was at all comparable to that of the great French scholars.

The present volume, which assembles some twenty-five essays and papers hitherto buried in learned or ephemeral publications, will be of extreme value to specialists and all concerned with the moulding of Anglican liturgy. To the larger number of Englishmen whose interest in the forms of Church worship is aesthetic or devotional rather than scientific, the collection may be less satisfying. Two essays, however, should have a wide appeal—that on Early Medieval Music and that on the origins and artistic development of the Christian altar. Each is a masterpiece of lucid presentation and the fruit of a lifetime's learning.

NEW NOVELS

A House of Children. By JOYCE CARY. *Michael Joseph.* 8s.

The Canyon. By PETER VIERTEL. *Collins.* 7s. 6d.

To-day and Forever. By PEARL BUCK. *Macmillan.* 8s. 6d.

The Horse that Could Whistle Dixie. By JEROME WEIDMAN. *Heinemann.* 8s.

Reviewers (those "sour old men," to borrow a reader's affectionate description) are often supposed to take a fiendish delight in reviewing bad books. Well, let us be honest: it is no hardship occasionally to attack a grossly overrated reputation or a ludicrous fashion. The target, then, is the current standard of criticism or of taste, and not the individual book itself. But surely no one, not even so depraved a creature as a reviewer, can find any pleasure in bad books for their own sake. Indeed, since the ordinary reader consults only his own pleasure, it probably takes a reviewer to appreciate the full horror of wading conscientiously through a swamp of incompetent, dull, derivative, stereotyped and enervating fiction. We do it in that exalted fit of heroism which moves men to volunteer for unpleasant tasks. We look hopefully for jewels in the general muck. One good novel in four would be a triumph over the law of averages, two in a batch count as a freak of good fortune, three as an event to tell to grandchildren, while having all four turn out winners is like discovering a new comet or being dealt thirteen trumps or hearing that a bomb has fallen outside the target area. It seems impossible, and yet it does sometimes happen. In fact it is my happy experience at this moment. I enjoyed Mr. Cary's novel, and I recommend it. I was delighted by Mr. Viertel, Miss Buck and Mr. Weidman: I recommend them too, all of them.

I remember reading Joyce Cary's *Castle Corner* a few years ago. As I recall it, it is a rambling story of Irish life at the opening of

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this century, full of lively incidents and the detail of childhood experience. Towards the end of that book the scene moves to London and Africa, and the story falls away from its earlier richness. Mr. Cary is obviously happiest where he is dealing with characters and scenes which presumably resemble his own childhood.

In *A House of Children* he pays scant attention to the telling of a consecutive story. Writing in the first person he confines himself exclusively to recapturing memories of that Irish childhood which he recounted so well in *Castle Corner*. It is a kind of childhood which must now have vanished, since it depended on numerous and closely situated families, a settled way of life, old-fashioned servants, and an air of cultured leisure in the adults. At one point Mr. Cary refers to the West of Ireland as the last refuge of the eighteenth century, and it is this recognition that a whole epoch is passing away which gives an added poignancy to the loss of childish landmarks, an added vividness to the description of them; for memory is most tenderly careful of those things of which it is the only guardian.

Mr. Cary is one of those uncommon writers who can recapture, not merely the general atmosphere and the memorable anecdotes of childhood, but the purity and inconsequence of emotional tone. It needs a very delicate touch to trace out the exact patterns of the incomprehensible things which children do, the sudden cruelties, the dislocations of purpose, the inner uncertainties and exaltations. Here, in the discrimination of wavering and conflicting impulses, Mr. Cary is at his best. Unlike so many writers about children he does not ignore that sudden startling flatness which records the limit of a child's gamut of response. Time and again I was delighted by a most sensitive fidelity which brought out the very essence of a remark or a gesture.

In *The Canyon* Peter Viertel has written an evocation of boyhood which is quite worth bracketing with *A House of Children*. This is a simpler book, lacking in the self-conscious artistry and the accumulation of minute detail which characterise Mr. Cary's work. Mr. Cary occasionally dogmatises about children; and in the same way, an occasional excess of literary polish and effort draws attention to the professional interests of the author. Mr. Viertel is not less scrupulous in his use of words, but he has chosen a less elaborate method. Detail, in the case of Mr. Cary, is everything. Mr. Viertel looks first of all to the main outline of objective action, drawing it with such resilience and intuition that the reader can be left to realise the latent implications for himself.

The scene of *The Canyon* is California. The main characters are George, the narrator, and his friends—Keetcheye the Indian, Perfecto the Mexican, Jimmy the bar-tender's son, and a young *equestrienne* who "had once doubled for Mary Pickford." This is essentially a boy's world, in that precarious moment when the timeless kingdom of childish security is invaded and distorted by the new forces of adolescence. As the story develops, Keetcheye's reckless self-willed courage is degraded to a sordid gangsterdom; Jimmy turns overnight into a smug and vulgar replica of his father; Perfecto drifts towards the gentle failure of the good-natured; and George is left to celebrate the lost splendour of their childhood in a Canyon which itself is losing the character that the boys had loved.

The Canyon is the first novel of a nineteen-year-old author, but it needs none of the indulgence that might be claimed for youth and inexperience. Mr. Viertel writes with mature confidence, alert to every gradation of pathos and humour and misunderstanding, and in command of a beautifully ironical vein of understatement. Although both *The Canyon* and *A House of Children* are elegies they have in common a lively buoyancy of spirit. Each celebrates a world of warm local community, in which the original, the eccentric and the insurgent are loved for the sake of their individuality; just as the eye, confined to a small copse, will count the trees singly and honour each for its particular shape.

Miss Buck is justly celebrated for her stories of Chinese life. In *To-day and Forever* she has collected about a dozen of these stories, and they will be appreciated both for their authoritative handling of unusual subject-matter and for the nicely tempered humanity of the author. I am not altogether happy with Miss Buck's slightly presumptuous faith in the uplifting influence of American conduct and ideals on the pagan (though lovable) Chinee: the exemplary connubial bliss of *The Lesson*, for example, verges on a lovey-dovey sugar and water which looks callow beside the traditional ripeness of Chinese wisdom. But in spite of a recurrent incompatibility of opinion—and I hope this adds to my tribute—I admire the deftness and polish of Miss Buck's writing and her obvious affection for her characters. She works neatly and economically, comes to the point without fuss, and closes with a gesture of comprehensive and sympathetic insight.

Many English writers, notably H. E. Bates and L. A. G. Strong, have deplored the devotion of magazine editors to stereotyped formula stories, and we are accustomed to having the terms "commercial" and "non-commercial" equated with "bad" and "good." The American writer is in a happier case, to judge by Jerome Weidman's preface to his volume of short stories. Mr. Weidman is well paid for his stories and has no kick against commercial editors. This looks like a tribute to American editors, since Mr. Weidman is an extremely able writer: but perhaps it only goes to show that there is a point where vulgar art and fine art meet. The substance of Mr. Weidman's stories exacts very little effort from the reader. They are slight unemphatic sketches for the most part, and their merit is the disciplined economy of means with which they are created and the subdued lyrical quality which Mr. Weidman succeeds in infusing into them. Like Ruth Draper he has a genius for thumb-nail portraits, particularly of immigrants. Mr. Weidman helps these people to speak. *The Horse That Could Whistle Dixie* is a brilliant collection of rapid sketches, rather in the manner of Saroyan but without the flights of fancy. I hope Mr. Weidman will repeat in this country the success which he has earned (and been so handsomely paid for) in the United States.

DESMOND HAWKINS

BRITAIN—TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

The Lesson of London. By RITCHIE CALDER. Searchlight Books No. 3. *Secker and Warburg*. 2s.

Start Planning Britain Now. By RITCHIE CALDER. Democratic Order Pamphlet No. 5. *Kegan Paul*. 1s.

When the Blitz first struck the East End last September, the first journalist to describe the conditions of the homeless, the failure of the services and the breakdown of the local authorities was Ritchie Calder. He had personal knowledge of the district in which the worst disaster took place, and he understood the complexities of local government that were involved. His first article in this journal, following his reports in the *Daily Herald*, was attacked in one of the leading Conservative papers as "irresponsible"; a few weeks afterwards most of the other newspapers were packed with reports of East End conditions, the muddle and misery of shelters and the chaos of authorities. Mr. Morrison and Miss Wilkinson were appointed

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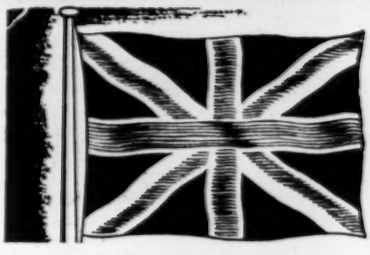

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soon after, and many of the suggestions which had been put forward in this journal and elsewhere were adopted. Improvement came slowly, but it came. Communal feeding began ; new officers were appointed and provision was made for the homeless. There was never better proof of the need for critical and constructive journalism. If a number of individuals had not published the truth about the East End the suffering would have been far worse, and it is by no means certain that London would have "taken it" with so much fortitude. As Mr. Calder rightly suggests in his *Lesson of London*, endurance of bad conditions is one thing, but tolerance of them is quite another, and, from the point of view of morale, a much more dangerous matter.

Mr. Calder has now made two small books of his experience as a wartime reporter. The first gives a graphic account of the bombing of dockland, and after making constructive suggestions about evacuation, communal feeding, the prevention of epidemics and so on, it moves on to the Provinces, where the experience of Coventry proved almost as important in shaking up the administration as the first attack on the docks. This point is taken up again in *Start Planning Britain Now*, where suggestions are made for the reconstruction of local government based on the experience of its breakdown in the war. The absurdity of overlapping local authorities is obvious in small matters as in great. If, for instance, the wardens of St. Pancras see an exposed light in a tall building in Holborn they "would be committing an act of aggression, invading Holborn's territory, if they crossed the street and warned the offender." In some cases there have been delays in clearing up damage because a bomb has fallen into the centre of a street, of which one side belongs to one borough and the other side to another. "One of London's biggest incidents, destroying buildings on two corners of a street, involved three different local authorities." The tube stations have provided even more ridiculous wrangles. One station may be in three or four boroughs ; it has not always been easy to decide who should be responsible for the lavatories, the first-aid posts or medical staff. There is nothing new in all this. The twenty-eight boroughs, the separate government of the City and the overlapping and insufficient authority of the L.C.C.—this is an old peacetime scandal which war has thrown into relief. Similarly, the experience of Coventry showed the difficulties that arise when many authorities with power over various functions and areas have to cope with the results of a serious raid. In the end, Coventry adopted a plan which was similar to that demanded by many of us for the East End. It set up a Regional Committee which represented the different services and gave it executive power.

Start Planning Britain Now is necessarily a sketchy pamphlet. Mr. Calder covers far too much ground in a small space. The value of the pamphlet will be to show the ordinary reader that reconstruction means much more than merely rebuilding. Are we going to have satellite towns or rebuilt suburbs or garden cities ? Where are we going to put industry and how far can the building for war now fit into a planned Britain ? Any plan involves that we assume the answers to fundamental questions about the size and age-distribution of our population and the balance of industrial and agricultural life. Mr. Calder has exceptionally interesting things to say about the allocation of industry and discusses the comparative cost of rebuilding Bethnal Green in its present site and rebuilding a new Bethnal Green in the country. *Start Planning Britain Now* provides the notes, as it were, for a bigger book. It contains many suggestions which Lord Reith and Mr. Greenwood might consider. It reminds us that in the Ministry of Reconstruction in the last war admirable blueprints for reconstruction were evolved, partly under Mr. Greenwood's guidance ; they were all scrapped in 1919. The destruction and change are so large to-day that we cannot repeat that disaster. Reconstruction of some sort there will be ; but it will be of the wrong kind unless the plans that are made now prevent the control falling into the hands of all manner of vested interests.

TOM PAINE

EDMUND BLUNDEN

Poems, 1930-1940. By EDMUND BLUNDEN. *Macmillan.* 10s. 6d.

Single poems by Edmund Blunden in anthologies always shine with a gentle clarity and promise a whole landscape of feeling, like Thomson's *Seasons :* here sharpened by coming rain, there brilliant with pools of sunlight. Pastoral without affectation, ripe and loving, they hymn the ordinary joys of the countryside. But a collection of them belies this simple promise. Love fades into care, ripeness into sweetness and intensely felt, accurate observation into a catalogue of remembered beauties. His obsession with the remembrance of past innocence often bears, not fruit, but only a fragrance.

Since *The Shepherd* Blunden's anxiety has intruded more and more persistently into all that he writes, and "the charred stub outspeaks the living tree." Nor is it only war that chars ; there is an intolerable charring of world and spirit that goes on day after day everywhere :

Gentle, dark day, and country tracks,
Houses as yet unhurt,
I saw you and I feared the axe
Invisible and curt
Which from that heaven of hellish chance
Would lay you in the dirt.

This is about the last war but it might well be about the last peace. When he actually writes about bungalows, development and Modern Life though his hatred is good his expression is arch :

You own it, legally bought and sold,
Elfins are out of date,
And better value, I shall be told,
Is a rose-pink housing estate.

Distaste, though not natural, is essential to him. Sometimes a nervous dislike of the modern induces him to use up-to-date analogies, *à la* Auden : "That cheque is signed and crossed," and "Old Pan Breaks through my stuff and votes an x-year plan." But it is not very happy, and is no more acceptable than such poetical archaisms as "strook" and his too-frequent references to nymphs and dryads. Modest and honest, he is still tainted with bookishness : there are still irritating echoes :

We sat among the jovial cricketers
In the horsed brake that drove up hill, down dale,
Leaving our crestfallen competitors
To alchemize defeat with nut-brown ale ;
Loud roared our laughter on the scarce-told tale,
Stiff labourers lifted up their jusky jaws
To give "The Old Arm Chair," and all the
Trojans roared applause.

"Rare Ben," even, gets a mention. But Blunden's gentle brooding over the literary past often does produce a vigorous tenderness that is not overburdened with allusion.

For the innocent Blunden, the Blunden unbruised by war and untormented by his irrecoverable past, there would still be a battle-ground, where his love of the library fights with his love of out-of-doors. "I talk of Wordsworth and I think of weeds." For it is only a step from the library to the academy where, not Wordsworth but all the academic chatter about him fights with the weeds and wastes the spring.

There is an apology in the preface for the appearance of still more war poems. "Those who saw that tremendous time will know that it does not easily give up its hold." But it seems as if Blunden will not give it up, and dares his memory to relinquish anything. How uneasy he is, how jealous of every minute torture, every suffering detail. The soldier poets of

this war will never have to hurl details at us so unceasingly because their experiences cannot be remote, unknown to wives and mothers, like those in the last war. They will not have to endure the extraordinary estrangement that is the point of Aldington's *Death of a Hero* and many other books, and also of a very beautiful poem by Blunden called *Reunion in War*, from *The Shepherd*. Just as one becomes used to the sound of bombs so one becomes used to the words savage, horrible, ghastly, shattered, ruinous and sacrificed, and they become meaningless. We have been hearing them for twenty years. But when Blunden is able to detach himself from the never-ending flood of his experiences, he produces something so moving that it makes up for all the sad undistinguished repetition of the rest. *Near Albert-sur-Ancre* 1916, is one of these poems. It begins :

> At the foot of the church tower I noticed some weeds,

and ends :

> Now shine, my dead garland, and while the fates trample
> The best we had blossoming, be you my example.

It is Hardy with a twist of hope : more human than Blunden's philosophising, more tragic than his accumulated horrors and calmer than his most rural dreams. MYFANWY PIPER

JUST AND UNJUST

War and Crime. By HERMANN MANNHEIM. *Watts.* 10s. 6d.

Dr. Mannheim, at present Lecturer on Criminology at the London School of Economics, was formerly Judge in the Court of Criminal Appeal in Berlin. One of the main problems to which his interesting book is devoted is that of establishing a clear distinction between war and crime on the one hand, and between "just and unjust wars" on the other—unjust wars being those "inspired by criminal motives." Here, it seems to me, he uses his terms loosely and confusedly. A "crime," we all agree, is merely a breach of a man-made law operating in a particular country at a particular time. An unemployed, or ill-paid, man, with a half-starving wife and children at home, may deliberately net or snare a rabbit on a farm adjacent to his cottage. In so doing, he performs a criminal act. But has he not contributed a little to the ad-"just"-ment of the scales held by the blindfolded goddess, rather than to their deflection? Or is the nature of justice also determined by contemporary lawyers and political law-makers? In his *History of Crime in England*, published in 1873, Pike wrote :

> The criminal tendencies of modern times seem in many cases to have been handed down from a period when that which is now considered crime was thought very nearly akin to virtue. The knights or, in other words, the class corresponding to our modern country gentry, were commonly engaged in exploits which it is extremely difficult to distinguish from brigandage.

Surely, it is obvious that a "law" can be as unjust as can any war—unless we make all discussion meaningless by saying that what constitutes justice is settled by the decisions of the law-courts. It seems to me that war and crimes of violence are but collective and individual examples of one and the same thing. "The philosophy of the professional criminal" has been defined as "a warrior's psychosis"; and, in their *History of English Law*, Pollock and Maitland laid down that "he who breaks the law has gone to war with the community."

It is surprising how many people still, in the bottom of their hearts, believe, or feel, that physical, material, or "worldly" success may be taken as an index not only of capacity to survive, but also of worthiness to survive. "History," wrote Professor Karl Pearson,

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"shows me one way, and one way only, in which a high state of civilisation has been produced—namely, the struggle of race with race, and the survival of the physically and mentally fitter race." So much for war. What about crime? We commonly speak of the detected criminal as the only embodiment or practitioner of crime; but surely, he is the failure, the one who has been defeated in his battle. It is a very small percentage of serious criminals who are found out in their lifetime; the successful criminal, just as surely as the successful warrior, is nearly always accepted as superior to his humdrum, ordinary neighbours. Indeed, Lombroso, quite logically, arguing from his standpoint, contended that "crime must have, if not a function, at least a social utility."

Some of the more interesting pages in *War and Crime* are those which deal with the relations between war and economic systems. Dr. Mannheim points out that it is not so much a static condition of absolute poverty as economic and social instability, or a sudden deterioration in the economic position of the people, that makes them responsive to bellicose and criminal suggestion. The psychological motivation of the leaders in war rarely coincides with that of their followers, in whom economic considerations play a bigger part. The author quotes Aristotle:

> The greatest crimes are caused by excess and not by necessity. Men do not become tyrants in order that they may not suffer cold. . . . There are crimes of which the motive is want. . . . But want is not the sole incentive to crime; men desire to gratify some passion which preys upon them. . . .

As with war, so with crime. The great defrauders, forgers, and fire-raisers have not been driven to their crimes by poverty and want. "Vanity, an exceedingly strong spirit of gambling, and lust for power have been the most outstanding characteristics of criminals of this type."

Dr. Mannheim would, however, have us dissociate ourselves from the old idea that the masses can in no way be held responsible for the crimes of their leaders. He points out that we are finding it necessary in administering the Criminal Law to penalise corporations, regardless of the mental guiltiness or innocence of the individuals composing them. Thus, to give a topical example, corporations are fined for contravening the lighting restrictions on their premises.

Dr. Mannheim is inclined to think that, in some ways, crimes of violence and war are alternative methods of expression of certain inherent impulses of mankind. "If the evil be discouraged in one form it may show itself in the other. Serious crimes of violence may decline owing to the competition of war as a more impressive form of violence; and, conversely, they may increase in frequency if war be completely suppressed." He even suggests that the following summary of historical sequence may reasonably be put forward, not as a foregone conclusion, but as a point for further discussion:

> *The Past:* Weak States—abundance of individual crime, but no organised war.
>
> *The Present:* Strong national States—frequent war and a lower rate of crime.
>
> *The Future:* Federal Union—no war, and consequently a high proportion of crimes of violence.

He believes that both war and crime can be overcome only by the use of opposing force. "It is certainly true," he writes, "that force alone does not settle anything, but it seems to have become abundantly clear that without force nothing can be settled in this world." He says that it would be a world calamity if the present war were to end without any preparatory steps being taken for the establishment of an impartial International Tribunal "for the assessment of the war guilt." Lest we should become too enthusiastically optimistic, however, he reminds us that:

> an International Court is unthinkable without an international mind; therefore it will take a very long time before such a tribunal will be able to begin its work, and at best some future generations may benefit by it.

The prospect is a bleak one.

HARRY ROBERTS

SPRING SONG

European Spring. By CLARE BOOTHE. *Hamish Hamilton.* 10s. 6d.

In this book Miss Boothe turns back the leaves and conducts us into the company, the rather Ritzy company, of the High-ups in Rome, Paris and London in the months before the invasion of the Lowlands. From the author of *The Women* one looks for pungent social criticism expressed with the witty denigration of the New-Yorker-Life tradition. *European Spring* does not fail us. The salons where Ciano and his wife play poker, the drawing rooms where the French politicians dissect one another, country house week-ends not a hundred miles from the Thames Valley, and in all three capitals those deep carpeted corridors lined with *vitrines* which are the mark of a really Grand Hotel—this is the ideal terrain for displaying Miss Boothe's destructive satirical talent.

The weakness is that her satire has too small a centre. Much of the time it seems to flow from a rather bitterly defensive Americanism. It is true, if you remember, that at that time we were all secretly hoping that someone else would fight the war for us; and when Russia attacked Finland America alone was left in the field. The universal assumption, that Time was on our side because Time meant American intervention, must have been particularly exasperating to an American when it was balanced by jokes in very bad taste about the war being finally fought out between the two yellow races—America and Japan. But there is a sharper edge to Miss Boothe's peevishness. She was, I understand, anti-Third Term; and to find over here that Roosevelt's re-election was considered not only desirable but even a foregone conclusion added a sharper malice to her reporting. It must be even more galling to find these assumptions justified.

In Rome Miss Boothe met the Cianos. Her descriptions are vivid but add little to our knowledge. Two hour's conversation with the Foreign Minister produced only the information that he had been an unsuccessful playwright and that his loyalty to his ideology was absolute. It is when she reaches Paris that Miss Boothe is really at her best. That melancholy period, when "nothing was happening" and when the politicians in the drawing rooms and the amateur strategists in the Ritz bars were proving to themselves that they couldn't lose, if only they kept on doing nothing, is analysed into a series of syllogisms:

> History repeats itself.
>
> The last war was a long one won by the allies.
>
> Therefore this will be a long war and the allies will win it.
>
> Does that seem now almost simple minded? Then add to it all the other syllogisms standing for it, bolstering it up, hemming it round which make the four-square magical blueprint of Victory. . . .

And there follows three pages of them, proving that Germany was growing weaker every day that time and America were with us and finally that "All Germans were stupid: It would be stupid to attack the Maginot Line: Therefore the Germans will attack the Maginot Line." As the second spring approaches it is not a bad thing to remind ourselves of these absurdities; for it was on such bubbles that the French morale was sustained and if a little of this acid American realism had got at them sooner, the let-down might have come in time to save France. Miss Boothe is especially good on French morale. The French were proud of their morale; they talked about it volubly; it became an almost visible and tangible asset, as solid and irrefragible as the Maginot Line itself; but

> It was the fruit neither of spiritual nor intellectual convictions concerning Democracy but of a natural and physical and purely nationalistic will to territorial integrity.

And, remembering how easily it dissipated when the shock came, there should be another lesson for us there in the spring of 1941.

French politicians are sitting targets, of course, to Miss Boothe's weapon, but she finishes them off neatly:

> In any of the drawing rooms you were perfectly safe in calling any Frenchman you met *Monsieur le Président*. Either he had been or he hoped to be the Prime Minister. Anyway when you called him that you either restored his confidence or renewed his hopes, a human courtesy you could not refuse him.

Or:

> French politicians when they were together blamed everything on the British. Separately, they generously divided the blame between the British and whatever former Prime Minister was absent from the gathering.

In London it is the insularity and the patronising attitude to her country which chiefly riles her, but on the whole she is kinder to us than she is to the French. We were at the time less at the centre of disturbance, still complacent—but the underside of that quality was our strength. "England may have a head of clay," Miss Boothe writes, "but her feet are firm and unfaltering."

Just in time for the invasion Miss Boothe went across to Holland and Belgium, and after that her book becomes just another piece of reporting. A lively, vivid piece, which gives the picture down to the fall of Paris better than any account I have read. But it is for her comments on the earlier French scene that she will chiefly be read. Some may think her view too partial for she moved exclusively among the Best People. Well, that was where her talent would naturally take her; and it was probably true that the rot began there, in the drawing rooms and the fashionable bars, just as in the same circumstances in England it might have begun in the Clubs and the week-end houses.

T. C. WORSLEY

The Shelter Book. Devised by CLEMENCE DANE. *Longmans.* 6s.

Probably fewer persons pass their nights underground than is popularly supposed. The majority prefer to die in bed rather than turn rabbit. But for those who prefer the sheltered life, Miss Dane has some useful tips in her Guide to Underground Living. Can you make a hay box? It's not the same as a manger. Are you aware that Snoring is included in the revised Seven deadly Sins of the Underworld? That Lust isn't? The book is divided into six "watches," and suitable literature is provided for each watch. Sir Hugh Walpole lulls children to sleep with a story, and Swinburne the sleeplessness of the turning forms, till Milton exclaims: "Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks. Methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam." There is much that is the best from the English classics in this little book, but perhaps more P. G. Wodehouse and less in the tenor of Wordsworth on immortality, would be more easily digested in the foetid atmosphere of the shelters.

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

OF all musical forms yet evolved, that of the sonata has shown itself perhaps the most rich in developmental resources. Originating in a mere collection of dance-movements, it branched out in many directions—into the classical symphony, the tone-poem, the fantasia (Liszt's

Sonata in B minor is an important landmark in orchestral as well as in keyboard music), and the music-drama of Wagner. Classical sonatas form has—as Professor Tovey points out in connection with the concerto—very seldom been strictly adhered to; but in the nineteenth century those composers who were temperamentally disinclined for pioneer work turned out symphonies as a matter of course, and far more because the form was thought to be the highest test than because they were genuinely moved to express their ideas in that way. Schematically based on the Fourth Symphony of Beethoven, the result was an array of works which—from Schumann to Stanford—are, in spite of incidental beauties, a monument to misguided effort. The villain of this piece was, I am afraid, Mendelssohn, whose own nature was so strongly conservative that it cramped the genius of his followers and ended by extinguishing his own altogether. His influence on musical taste, which was overwhelming throughout the middle years of the century, was in many respects (e.g., his revival of Bach) very stimulating, but hardly where questions of form were concerned. In fact, he and his school succeeded in erecting the sonata into a representative of German officialdom; to extend or transform it in any essential way became *strengstens verboten*, and natures obviously timid, like Bruckner, or fundamentally unenterprising, like Brahms and Dvorák, never, in fact, dared to do so. (Even the Finale of Brahms's Fourth Symphony is vouched for by that of the *Eroica*.)

It would be misleading to describe Schumann as timid; yet when it came to large-scale works his imagination usually failed him. His one opera, for instance, is a mausoleum full of beautiful mouldings and with one or two fine groups of sculpture standing about in it; but the whole thing is none the less built round a dead body—that of grand opera in the *Euryanthe* tradition, which by 1850 (the year, incidentally, of *Lohengrin* as well as of *Genoveva*) had already relinquished the torch to Wagner. After this thumping failure, Schumann attempted to express his feeling for drama in less direct forms—*Faust*, *Paradise and the Peri*, the *Manfred* music—but the comparative neglect of these works is an indication, not that they are in themselves dull or ineffective, but that at the time they were composed dramatic music was inexorably committed to Wagner. The torch of symphony had likewise been snatched from Mendelssohn by Liszt, but this did not become obvious until it was seen flaring in the hand of Strauss. Berlioz remained—and remains—a special case. Meanwhile, the official German symphony continued to be composed, and it was inevitable, though most unfortunate, that Schumann should have felt himself impelled to "oblige"; for his musical imagination, so perfectly adapted to short pieces, songs and fantasias, was not suited to coping with the sonata—according to Mendelssohn. Instead of adapting the form freely to his material, he gave way to its strictures, with the result that his symphonies are among his least successful works, though they contain much beautiful music. It is noteworthy that, when it came to writing concertos, he seems to have felt much more sure of himself. On all accounts, indeed, it is a thousand pities that circumstances should drive Schumann into obstinate opposition to the vital current of music in his time, and I think it is arguable that a composer of his particular gifts might have felt more at home in an era of a totally different kind—Tudor England, say, or even the Europe of 1918–39. In the former his lyric genius would have had at least as much scope as it actually did; in the latter his dramatic and fantastic side would not have been admonished to "keep off the grass."

That is but idle speculation, but the foregoing paragraphs were designed to justify my opinion that the "*Spring*" *Symphony in B flat, op.* 38, is a feeble work. To begin with, it is utterly unspontaneous, and if there is one quality above all others which is needed to express the feeling of Spring, it is, I should have thought, spontaneity. The songs and chamber music of Schumann, of course, possess this quality in a quite extraordinary degree; but the fact that he was composing a symphony seems to have deprived him of all elasticity of mind—of all ability to let his imagination explore his material (good stuff in itself) and to indulge in those sudden felicities which elsewhere characterise his genius. So that the opening movement of the B flat Symphony is about as wooden as can be imagined: Schumann's method of proceeding from one phase to another is horribly rigid and "foreseeable." None of his symphonies contains any element of surprise, and this one least of all. The Larghetto, again, has a lovely tune, in the Mendelssohn manner; but a song melody repeated with decorations is surely, considered as a scheme for a symphonic slow movement, rather on the helpless side—unless, as in Mahler's Fifth, this form of simplicity is designed to set off the elaboration of the rest of the work, which is here not the case. The Scherzo, with its double Trio, is more satisfactory from every point of view; but the Finale lets us down again with its irredeemably pianistic phraseology. However, I should prefer my readers to judge this work for themselves, at the same time pointing out that, if they like this kind of symphony, that in *F major* by Hermann Goetz (also entitled "Spring") is far more worthy both of recognition and of recording. The performance of the Schumann

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—by Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra (H.M.V.)—has all the right qualities, but the recording is very rough in the loud passages and the *tutti* are apt to sound confused (but that is partly the composer's fault).

It was something of a surprise to me to find the new issue of Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe Suite No.* 2, by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra (H.M.V.), to all intents and purposes as good as Koussevitzky's memorable set. The wood-wind shimmer at the opening (surely one of the most voluptuously beautiful passages, considered purely as *sound*, in the whole of modern music) is perhaps rather too much subdued in favour of the chromatic string octaves at the other end of the register; otherwise I could detect no fault of interpretation, and the recording, if not quite up to English standards, has considerable brilliance. As the Impressionist era recedes, I think this particular work stands out more and more clearly as one of its greatest masterpieces. When the war is at last over, the time should be ripe for producing the ballet again in its entirety: after the drabness, the violence and crudity, the stress of an existence reduced to its lowest terms, this ravishing flower of a past civilisation might stir us again to recapture some of that vanished delicacy and distinction.

The effort to keep those indispensable qualities alive, in spite of everything, is no doubt reason enough for yet one more recording of Mozart's *Serenade in G* (*K.* 525)—in other words, the *Kleine Nachtmusik*—this time by the strings of the L.S.O. under Weingartner (Col.). The recording is admirable, but I cannot feel that the Romanza ought to be taken quite so briskly; for one thing, this procedure spoils the intended contrast of the *scherzoso* interlude. Otherwise the effect of a body of strings seems to me, in the case of this work, preferable to a quartet of soloists.

Few would select Louis Kentner from among the world's pianists to interpret Chopin for them, if only because of the fulsome *rubato* to which he gives constant way. The *Impromptu in F sharp* (Col.) is a very subtle, reminiscential meditation, but Kentner delivers it as a virtuoso piece, *à la* Liszt, and yields also to the temptation to make the left-hand octave passage an occasion for a display of "technique." This is an error of taste. The *Fantaisie Impromptu in C sharp minor*, on the obverse, suffers less from a like treatment; but even here I prefer Eileen Joyce's rendering, for she is more skilful in concealing from us that the theme of the *cantabile* section is repeated once too often.

A very much more successful disc contains the *Scherzo* from Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* music (arr. Rachmaninoff) and Rachmaninoff's own *Prelude in B minor, op.* 32, *No.* 10, played by Moiseiwitsch (H.M.V.). The former is a miracle of transcription performed with astonishing clarity, delicacy and exactitude; on the loveliness of the piece itself it is unnecessary for me to enlarge. This record should on no account be missed, for the Rachmaninoff *Prelude in B minor* is very beautiful and rarely heard.

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RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 575

Set by Thomas Smallbones

Competitors are invited to use Marvell's *Ode on Cromwell's Return from Ireland* as a model for a 20 line ode on Mr. Wendell Willkie. For the benefit of those who have not their Marvells with them I quote one verse as a pattern:

He nothing common did nor mean
Upon that memorable scene
But with a keener eye
The axe's edge did try.

Report by Thomas Smallbones

The Marvell metre was chosen as a prophylactic against the heroics which are mercifully absent from our reactions to this war. Competitors who essayed them found themselves, as I had hoped they might be, tripped up on the wires of the two short lines. The alternatives were to catch the language and something of the conceits of the seventeenth century, or to jump right into a modern version. The brave who tried the latter method were more courageous than successful. X contributed a slang version but the slang was a little out-of-date. R. S. Jaffray mixed both methods beginning in Ye Olde and ending:

Now to the inbound Middle West
We speed with cheers the parting guest
To teach the facts of life
To Babbit and his wife.

I was sorry to find some NEW STATESMAN AND NATION readers taking an acid line about Mr. Willkie's Teuton origin, as if we are, any of us, safe once we begin examining our paternal grandmothers. But if the point was to be made, I.H.B. made it least offensively:

Only the smallest fly was there
Within that pot of ointment rare
Oh come now, my dear Sir
Not really *Willike*.

But the general run kept a level congratulatory tone. J. W. I. Harford, Veritas, John Thornton, and Nancy Gunter sent in good entries, but it became a question of choosing between B. F. Jones, I.R.I.S., Charles Furbank and Horace Samuel. B. Francis Jones fell down on the metre on the last verse. Horace Samuel seemed to me to have caught a larger whiff of the seventeenth century than the others and in the struggle for second place Charles Furbank, though uneven, won finally by making a few bolder strokes.

FIRST PRIZE

The forward guy that would appear
Must now forsake elections dear,
And on his lightning tour
Be the world's cynosure.

Will in two years the Hun be tamed,
Will the wild Irish be ashamed,
And will John Bull play ball
At Mars high festival?

He probed the land from slum to Ritz,
Like Ajax he defied the Blitz,
And in the Public's heart,
Launched his convivial dart.

With observation swift and keen
He watched the memorable scene,
And with appraising eye,
Britain's stout heart did try.

Returning on Mercurial wings
Into the Council swift he srpings
"Save, ere it be too late
"Both Worlds from the same fate."

HORACE SAMUEL

SECOND PRIZE

The bare-foot boy on Hermes' feet,
Was flown to Liberty's retreat,
Determining to find
All that was in our mind.

And if he could, relieve our cares,
With all the skill he'd watered shares:
In fact were we content
He'd be our President.

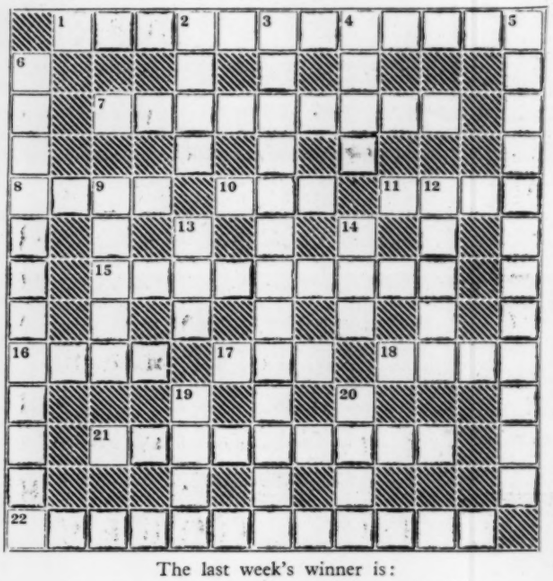
He smiled so much, it seemed the sun
Stretched out its beams to ev'ryone,
And when he laughed, the Mall
Shook and grew jovial.

The shelter and the ale-house both
On meeting him to part were loth,
Nor was he welcomed less
'Midst ruin and distress.

When he had plumbed us all he went,
This visit was most kindly meant,
A gift as rare in sort
As those Columbus brought.

CHARLES FURBANK

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 21 *Set by* V. S.



The last week's winner is:

Miss M. P. Swift, Hope Cottage, West Drayton.

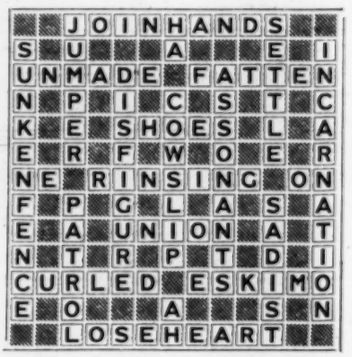
ACROSS

1. Volition of snipe? (4, 1, 3 & 4)
7. The doorstop used to have young. (9)
8. Cakes are spoiled by lumps. (4)
10 & 17. He went ahead as green turned red. (6)
11 & 17. 'Arry doesn't intend to go straight with the girl. (7)
15. The actor who has nothing to say about wine. (9)
16. Split cane. (4)
17. See 10 & 11.
18. *rev.* Extremely light. (4)
21. Plant for production of *ersatz wein?* (9)
22. American version of twiddling one's thumbs in the air. (6 & 6)

DOWN.

2. Turned up with a jemmy to get it? (4)
3. *rev.* Good Friday on Easter Day (3, 6 & 4).
4. *rev.* Treble value, reading between the lines. (4)
5. Office of Air Line from Sodom to Gomorrah? (5 & 7).
6. *Early* Household but not necessarily in Staffs Beds! (6 & 6)
9. Dock for immoral act when undergraduate. (5)
12. English King and Queen or is that a mistake? (5)
13 & 14. Take Part In It. (6)
14. See 13.
19. Cost about a quid to run. (4)
20. Blow after blow with an axe. (4)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By URBANUS

RAILWAY DIVIDENDS AND FUTURES—EQUITY SHARES WAR OUTLOOK—OIL

THE generous dividends declared by the railway managements failed to put steam into the home railway market. And small wonder. The market is convinced that the Government intends to denounce the railway agreement. The Minister of Transport has already given notice that the war damage clause, under which the first £10 millions of damage are chargeable against revenues and therefore coverable by an increase in fares and charges, must be revised and the fact that fares and charges have not been and practically cannot be raised concurrently with an increase in costs suggests that the inflationary cost-charges adjustment clause will not be tolerated much longer. Nationalisation is, of course, the ultimate end of the railways, but without the co-ordination of roads, canals and coastwise shipping, nationalisation would not be an economic proposition. I doubt whether the Government could introduce such a far-reaching transport scheme, involving complicated questions of compensation to stockholders, in the middle of a war, but I fail to see why it should not run the railways for the rest of the war as a State enterprise, allowing the stockholders the benefit of the present minimum guarantee but appropriating all the revenues in excess. Last year the railway pool earned £3 millions in excess of the minimum guarantee of £41 millions, and this enabled L.M. and S. and Great Western to pay 1½ per cent. and 4 per cent. respectively on their ordinary stocks, L. and N.E. 2 per cent. on its second preference stock, and Southern 1½ per cent. on its deferred stock.

The junior preference stocks at present prices are therefore a fair gamble as nationalisation "futures":—

		Yield %
L.M. and S. 4% (1st) pref. ..	51½	7.8
L.M. and S. 4% (1923) pref. ..	36¾	10.9
L. and N.E. 4% 1st pref.	36¼	11.0
Southern 5% pref. ord.	47½	10.5

The railway managements are notoriously good bargainers when they meet the politicians.

* * *

Investors had better forget about their equity shares for the remainder of the war. They cannot expect them to go up, for there is no such thing as an inflation hedge in the equity markets in this war, and it is very probable that they will see them go down in view of rising costs, reduced profit margins and falling turnover. But who wants to sell them and to be out of them if there is any chance of a post-war boom? Looking at industrial and commercial equities generally, the manufacturers are in a more favoured position than the wholesalers and retailers, but that is not saying much. No manufacturer can maintain his old ratio of profit on Government contracts, and if he belongs to a class of civilian trade restricted severely by official quotas, he may be left with a half-idle plant and be unable to economise by concentrating his remaining production. The distributors are, of course, more severely hit by the restriction of the home trade and there will be quite a struggle for survival, in which the big chain stores, distributed throughout the provinces and enjoying a manufacturing pull, will have a big advantage over their smaller and localised competitors. The food distributors will be better off than the retailers of household and personal goods, but their profit margins and turnover will likewise decline. I see no bright lining to the darkening clouds which are gathering over the equity share markets for the remainder of the war. Nevertheless I expect no volume of selling from the staunch old holders. It is becoming almost a matter of patriotism to hold on to British ordinary shares. This explains why London Brick, receiving only a 10 per cent. dividend, remain obstinately at over 46s. 3d., or why Shell Transport with a potential 5 per cent. net refuse to go under 40s.

* * *

The oil situation comes into the news with the threat of the German drive through Turkey to two Mesopotamian oilfields and the back-door to Egypt. Germany is not yet short of oil, but she may well be in 1942 if she has not captured more oilfields. So Hitler looks to the enormous potential Iraq production and the promising new field of the Anglo-Egyptian Oilfields on the east side of the Red Sea. Rumania gives him immediately some help but it must not be exaggerated. This year Rumania will have for export about 4 million tons of oil but to bring this quantity into the German territory will require a huge increase in the Danube oil barges and the Rumanian railway tank cars. Last year the Danube carried 1¼ million tons of oil from Rumania and the railways only 180,000 tons. The rest of the oil exported went by sea. Germany is, of course, building oil barges and railway tank cars at feverish speed—the rail shipments of oil from Rumania have already been pushed up to 100,000 tons a month—and it is reported that the Germans are building two new pipe-lines from the fields to ports on the Danube. But all these facilities can be bombed by the R.A.F. The Balkan-Turkey campaign, when it breaks, will be a fight for oil. But let us not suppose that we are fighting to restore to Shell, Anglo-Iranian and Phoenix their oil interests in Rumania.

Company Meeting

THE NATIONAL MUTUAL LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY

THE 111th Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at Stanmore, Middlesex, on February 26th. The Hon. Francis N. Curzon, chairman, presided, and said (in part):—

The volume of new business in 1940 was less by 30 per cent. than that of 1939. A year ago I expressed the view that we should "do well to maintain in 1940 even the reduced level of 1939"; and although this hope has been falsified a fall of no more than 30 per cent. is a very good achievement, and is a good deal less than that suffered by most comparable Life Offices. I attribute our better experience to our unique scheme for covering home war risks without extra charge.

We, in common with other insurance companies, have undertaken to support new Government loans with all our new monies. Intending policyholders are in a happy position therefore to combine their own interests with the wider national interest.

The effect of a reduced income and an outgo little different in the aggregate from its peacetime figure has slowed down the normal growth of the funds. The assurance funds have increased during the year by little more than £5,000 to their present figure of £6,977,543. I shall expect the usual increase to be resumed when normal conditions prevail.

The amount paid out in claims was much the same as before. The 1940 figure, however, includes war claims under fifteen policies for a total of £14,000, and these have reduced the mortality profit which otherwise would have been little different from the preceding year. Expenses are less than in 1939, and although the crude expense ratio has risen from 11.9 per cent. to 12.7 per cent. of the premium income, the real ratio, allowing for single premiums and for annuities, has fallen slightly from 13.2 per cent. to 13 per cent.

You will see from the balance sheet the disposition of our assets and the changes that have been made during the year. The item of £220,000 representing short term deposits with Building Societies has disappeared, and £100,000 of it has been translated into a fixed loan on favourable terms to one of the large old-established Societies. The remainder—and indeed considerably more, as you will see—has been invested in British Government securities. The combined total of the reserve fund and the new Contingency Fund is £176,621 and, compared with the corresponding total of £233,928 a year ago, shows a diminution of £57,307. Adding to this sum the £20,000 allocated from the Reserve Fund a year ago, we arrive at a total depreciation of £77,307 which in relation to assets of £7½ millions and incurred in such a year as that from which we have just emerged is not an unsatisfactory result.

We have been encouraged to find how well the interest income has stood up to the difficulties of 1940, an achievement which has been assisted by the substantial purchases on favourable terms of fixed interest securities which were made in the latter part of 1939 and the early months of 1940. The net rate of interest is thus virtually unchanged at £3 12s. 11d. per cent.

Contingency Fund, which figures in the balance sheet for the first time, is the outcome of a careful review by your Board of all the Society's mortgages and properties and of an attempt to measure known or anticipated losses. Nearly all of them are due to war conditions and we may hope are transient.

The year 1940 marks the close of another biennial period, and we should in normal times have expected to make a distribution of profits for these two years. But among the contingencies that yet remain is the possibility of heavy—even though temporary—stock exchange depreciation resulting from the hazards of war. Your Board were driven therefore to the conclusion that prudence is best served by conserving our resources and postponing any general distribution. This decision does not exclude the possibility that the distribution when made shall apply retrospectively to the years 1939 and 1940. The Society has earned a highly satisfactory profit during these two years. This when combined with the large carry forward from the last valuation and the reserves in the balance sheet form a solid assurance that we are well stored against the unknown future.

The Report and Accounts were adopted.

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PURELY PERSONAL

"THE MEN WERE MAGNIFICENT"—and the King Six 8d. Cigars were excellent.

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